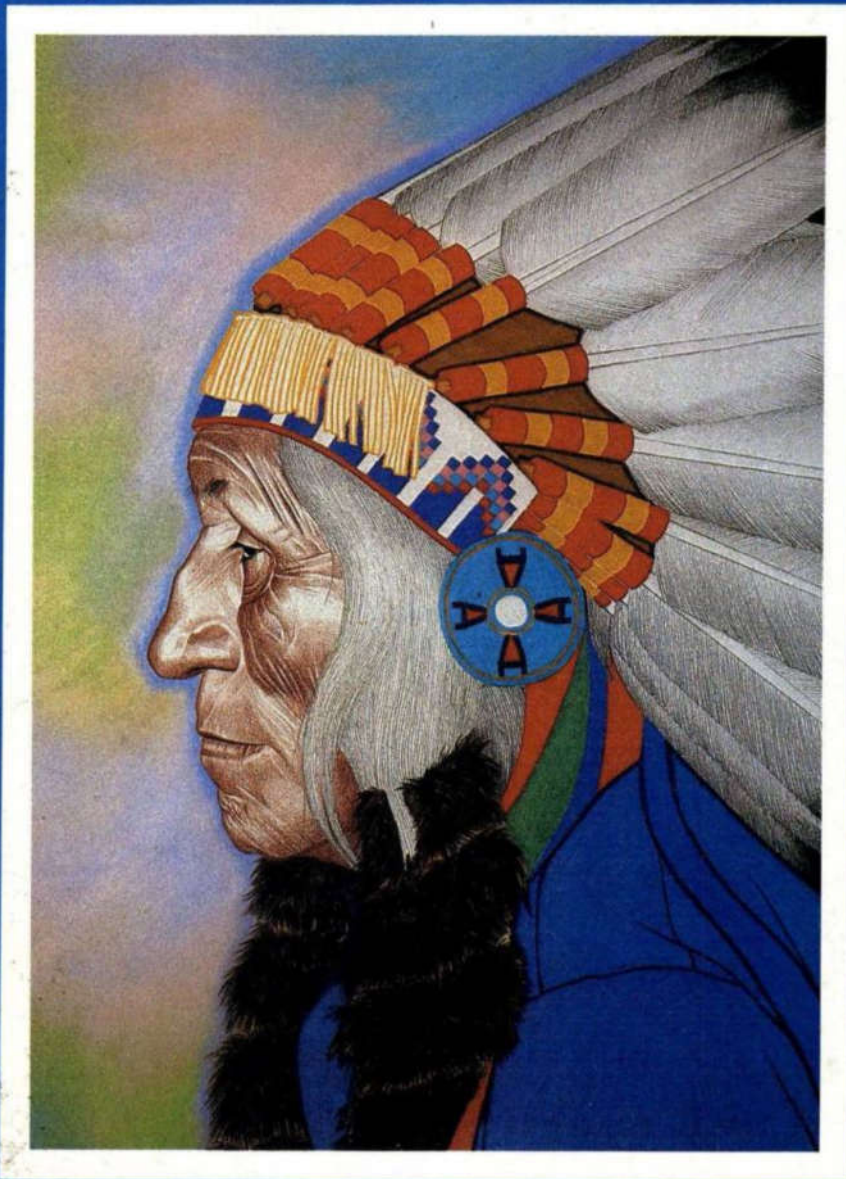


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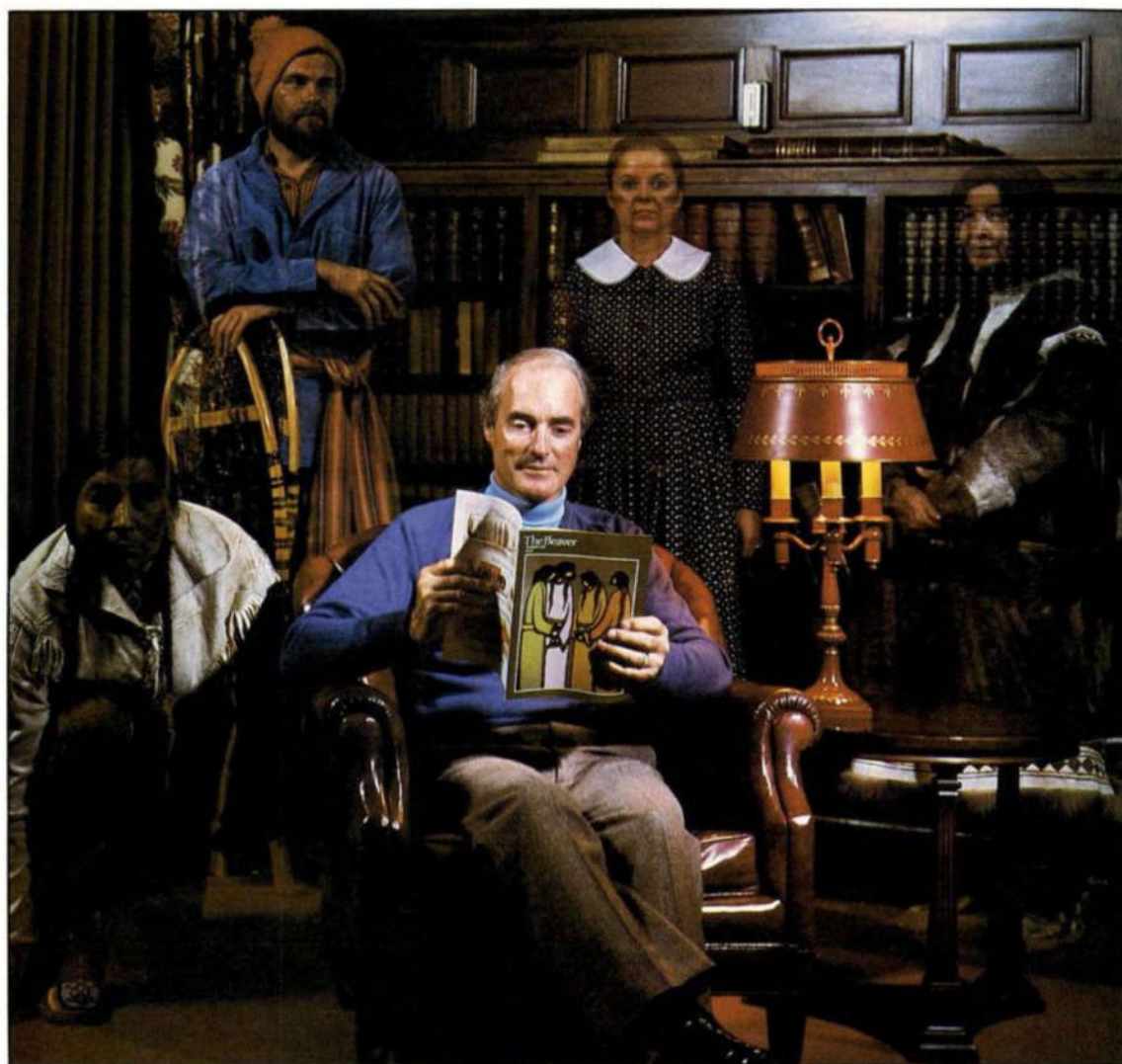


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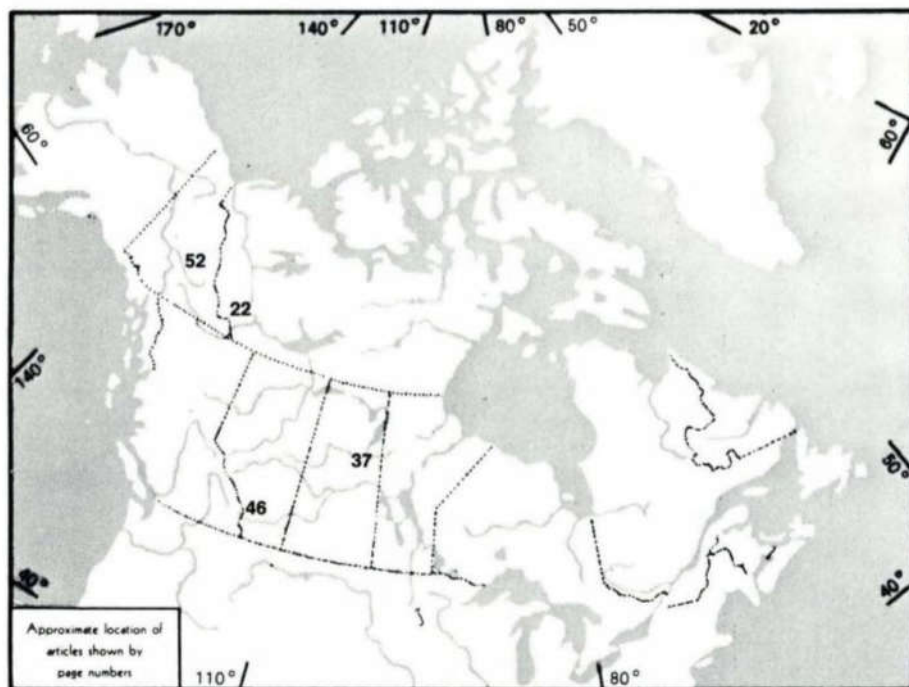
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CONTENTS

LANGDON KIHN: INDIAN PORTRAIT ARTIST G. J. Edwards and G. T. Edwards	4	37 'LIKE WORDS OF FIRE' LORE OF THE WOODLAND CREE FROM THE JOURNALS OF P. G. DOWNES R. H. Cockburn
THE WINTERING-OVER OF ROYAL NAVY SHIPS IN THE CANADIAN ARCTIC, 1819-1876 C. S. Mackinnon	12	46 THE CAVE AND BASIN HOT SPRINGS David Smyth
NAHANNI GOLD Kerry Abel	22	52 KENO CITY D. M. Treilhard
THE SOUND OF ESKIMO MUSIC W. Gillies Ross	28	58 NORTHERN BOOKS

COVER: Chief Bear-Hat or Klowklakiuka, a Kootenay Indian of southeastern British Columbia. Portrait by W. Langdon Kihn, 1926. 51 x 38.1 cm. From the collection of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London.

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Langdon Kihn: Indian Portrait Artist

By Gregory J. Edwards and Grant T. Edwards



Courtesy of Phyllis Kihn

W. Langdon Kihn (1898-1957).

From a photograph taken by his wife Helen at Morley, Alberta, 1922.

G. J. Edwards, a graduate of the University of British Columbia, is a writer, living in Vancouver.

G. T. Edwards is a Ph.D. candidate at Green College, Oxford.

IN THE SPRING OF 1925, a young American portrait artist gave an interview to magazine writer Muriel Brewster in Ottawa. By the time Brewster's story appeared in the 6 June edition of the *Toronto Star Weekly*, Langdon Kihn, a New Yorker, had been painting the Indians of Canada for three years.

She asked Kihn how he had begun. 'By chance, as far as I know,' he replied. 'I went west with [Winold] Reiss, just on a trip, and I got started in Montana, among the Blackfeet. . . . I was more interested in this work than in anything else that I had attempted, and I kept it up. Their faces fascinate me: they look as if they had been carved out of stone with a chisel. I never get tired of painting them.'

Kihn told her about meeting a rough and tough, pugilistic and weather-beaten old Indian warrior who sat by the hour to tell Kihn 'legends about buttercups and fairies'.

Langdon Kihn was born in 1898, in Brooklyn, New York, to parents of German descent; his father was a hand-engraver of steel. Kihn's artistic interest began at 13 when he watched George Bellows sketch in oils. At 15 he studied under Homer Boss and, at 17, with the Art Students' League, New York, under Vincent Dumond, Kenneth Miller and George Luks.

At 20, he took private lessons from Winold Reiss who had been inspired to emigrate from Munich to the United States by James F. Cooper's novels. Reiss used pastel and tempera to paint Indian portraits in a posteresque style. At 21, in 1919, Kihn went with Reiss to Montana to paint the Blackfeet. Later, encouraged by an American ethnologist, Charles W. Lummis, Kihn painted the Pueblos of New Mexico.

At 23, after a second trip to New Mexico sponsored by his father, Kihn had his first show at the Old-Tollerton Gallery in San Francisco. Reviews praised his work. In 1922, the Art Museum of Santa Fe, New Mexico, sponsored him; the Anderson Galleries, New York, exhibited his work; and the Brooklyn Museum of Arts and Sciences sent his work to forty showings in the United States.

'Most artists have seen the Indians as a race, collectively,' wrote a critic for the *International Studio Magazine*, 'while Mr. Kihn sees them as individuals with all of their differences of feature and character.'

In an interview for the *Studio Magazine* — which

praised Kihn's portraits for mastery of design, delineations of character, significant form, and strong sculptural faces — Kihn talked about the end of the Pueblos' art of pottery making, and the end of their way of life. 'Influenced by school teachers to neglect their costumes, more and more Pueblos are wearing the hideous clothes forced upon us by civilization. Their love of the dance is thwarted, repressed at every opportunity. Indian art, America's most precious heritage, is on the point of destruction. And if once destroyed, it will not grow again. Future generations more intelligent than we, will regard us as fools too busy with building bathrooms to see beauty.'

Kihn got his first commission to paint in Canada when ethnologist and author C. Marius Barbeau introduced him to John Murray Gibbon, the Canadian Pacific Railway's general publicity agent and a writer, historian and patron of the arts.

Murray Gibbon, on behalf of the railway, invited Kihn to paint British Columbia's Kootenay Indians and Alberta's Stoney Indians. Kihn also painted some cowboys, and seven or eight of British Columbia's Doukhobors including John E. Konkin, Anastasia Verigagan and Billy Chernoff, all of Brilliant.

That same summer, 1922, Kihn and his wife, Helen, continued their trip by going to Vancouver Island, where Kihn painted the Nootka Indians.

Marius Barbeau used Kihn's work to illustrate his book *Indian Days in the Canadian Rockies* in which Barbeau wrote about the reactions of the old Stoney and Kootenay Indians to Kihn's pictures. 'His colored portraits were so realistic, they brought out the character of the model so distinctively that the Indians were painfully surprised; indeed, they were shocked. . . . One of them confided "In the old days, there were strong medicines. A man would draw a picture of his enemy whom he wanted to injure; he would draw it on a piece of bark or buckskin. Then, he would add whatever he pleased — a rope around the neck or an arrow half buried in his heart. Everything happened as on the picture; the rope or arrow would kill the man. The more perfect the resemblance, the stronger the medicine, the surer the effect." Fortunately, for Mr. Kihn, however, the suspicion of witchcraft did not last very long.'

In 1924 the National Museum of Canada and the Canadian National Railway supported Kihn by sponsoring his and Barbeau's field work amongst the Gitksan Indians of Skeena River.

Kihn did some sixty portraits and canvasses and wrote an article for *Scribner's Magazine*. He described their spear fishing with hooks of bone; their eating of dried and smoked salmon; their gabled, cedar plank-houses set in ten villages along the Skeena River; their cedar canoes; and their cedar totem poles. Outside of each house, he observed, stood one, two or three totem



'Joe Nana or Running Calf, Kootenay Indian'. Crayon and pencil on cream paper (49.2 cm x 36.8 cm), 1922.



'Susette, Kootenay Indian'. Crayon and pencil on cream paper (49.2 cm x 37.4 cm), 1922.

Glenbow photograph

'... strength, simplicity and brilliancy of tone are the outstanding characteristics of Mr. Kihn's pictures... [their] richness of colour is... wholly pleasing and harmonious.'

poles, 'which are neither pagan gods, nor of any religious significance. They merely represent the crests and stories, myths and traditions of the people. The entire aspect of the country is unique... the gorgeous setting of gigantic peaks, the rushing mountain streams, the profusion and wealth of rich vegetation, and then those quiet, sleepy little villages with their weird and quaint people.'

Kihn saw the white man as a shadow cast over the Gitskan: 'fur and women for rum and muskets and trinkets.' He chided the missionaries for felling and burning totem poles as false idols. Kihn remarked that, in remote villages on the Skeena, totems still stood.

Kihn described the Gitskans as having 'strikingly Asiatic features' and gave his impression of their personality. 'Unlike the Indians east of the Rockies, their personalities are not pleasing. They are suspicious, shrewd and sometimes sullen. They are sharp-witted and quick tongued. They are quite emotional and highly keyed. Nowadays, though they are not all poor, they live in filth. Above all, they are highly intelligent.'

Kihn admired the Gitskans' art for its refinement in taste and its naivety of expression. 'In brief, all their art is interpretive. Their carved and painted ravens, wolves, and salmon are family crests... stories and sometimes actual history or events connected with the family... Their art is full of imagery.'

He described a dance where participants wore a wolf pelt, or a bear skin, or a blanket of twisted cedar bark, dyed bright orange and decorated with swan's down and fur. Around their neck they would wear a large ring of twisted cedar bark; on their head, a mask, carved in wood, in the figure of the wolf or the thunderbird. This headdress would be coloured in brilliant shades, inlaid with abalone shell, and crowned with pale amber barbs, the whiskers of the sea lion.

'Before they dance, they spit on these and place on them the white tufts of eagle's down. When they dance, the down blows off and floats about like snow. This signifies happiness, peace and goodwill to all.'

During the spring of 1925, the National Museum of Canada exhibited Kihn's work on Parliament Hill, Ottawa and at the Art Club, Montreal.

The *Ottawa Citizen* noted that the 'strength, simplicity and brilliancy of tone are the outstanding characteristics of Mr. Kihn's pictures... [their] richness of colour is... wholly pleasing and harmonious; for, despite their high tones, the pictures are not

garish... He obtains his uncommonly direct results through the use of crayon to draw the faces of his sitters, and the use of a more opaque medium for the background and dress designs.'

The critic for the *Ottawa Journal* reported, 'already a beneficent result of the sight of the half closed or tightly shut eyes has resulted in the sending, last week, of a doctor to the West to inquire into the causes of prevalent eye disease among the Indians.' 'This same feature of Kihn's Gitskans was noted by the *International Studio Magazine*. 'The artist tells of one old man, blind, who was brought some twenty miles to pose for him and who made the trip back through the wilderness alone.'

In 1926, while Kihn painted in Montana for the Great Northern Railroad, Marius Barbeau enticed artists A. Y. Jackson and Edwin Holgate to Canada's West Coast — an enticement for which Barbeau, in several magazine articles, credited Kihn. 'The [1925] exhibition aroused interest both in the artist, a young New Yorker, and the country he was among the first to interpret. Not only was his work attractive and original, but it formed a record of Indian life at a time when it was passing out of existence... The Southam brothers, newspaper publishers, purchased more than thirty of the best canvasses and donated representative groups to Canadian art galleries... though an outsider, himself, he has contributed to the opening of a new field, so far neglected, and thus helped the enrichment of national consciousness...'

'Canadian painting for some years has broken new ground under the leadership of the group of seven... But its domain at first was restricted mostly to the Georgian Bay and Central Ontario. Kihn's success made it easy for me later to induce Eastern Canadian painters, including some of the group, to extend their activities to the Northwest. Alexander Jackson of Toronto and Edwin Holgate of Montreal were the first, after Kihn, to initiate the movement.'

Several other artists joined the exodus to the West Coast and the West generally. From their works and collections of Indian artifacts in museums, Barbeau co-ordinated the National Gallery of Canada's West Coast Indian Art Exhibition, shown during late 1927 and early 1928, in Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto.

Among the artists shown was Emily Carr. The National Gallery's director Eric Brown had visited her during the summer of 1927 to persuade her to show her earlier oil paintings done in 1912.

Carr's works appeared prominently with those of Lawren Harris, Edwin Holgate, A. Y. Jackson, F. H. Varley, Walter J. Phillips, Florence Wyle, Pegi Nicol, Paul Kane, Annie D. Savage and Langdon Kihn. About Emily Carr, Barbeau wrote: 'Of all the painters, Carr is one whose interpretations of the Coast are, in a way, the most authentic and novel.'

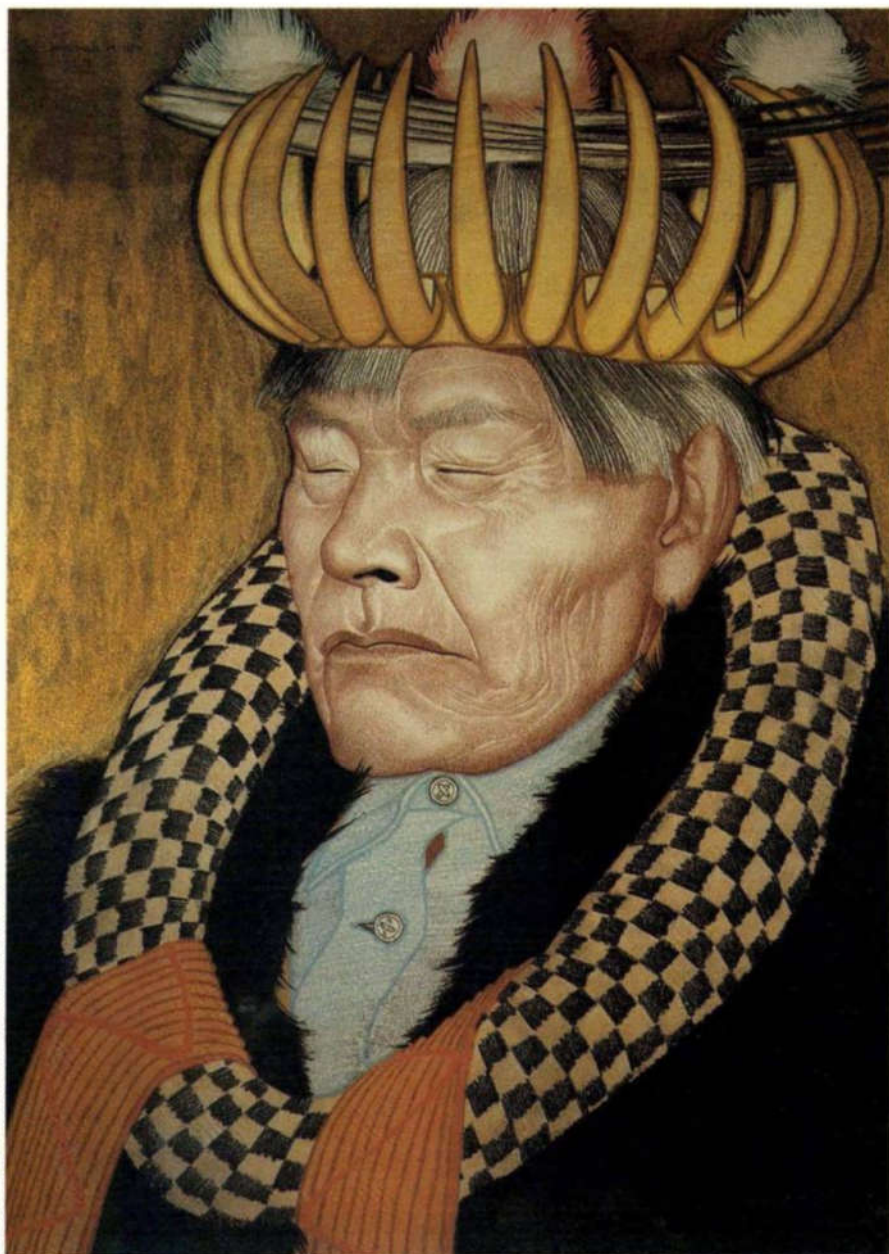


'Lelt or Snake, Tsimshian Indian, Gitwanga, B. C.' (76 cm x 50.7 cm). Kihn made this water-colour drawing during a field trip in 1924 with his long-time friend, Marius Barbeau. The following spring the National Museum exhibited Kihn's work on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. The sight of the half-closed or tightly shut eyes of many of his subjects resulted in an immediate enquiry into the causes of eye disease among the Indians.



Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London

Mrs Captain Jack whose Indian name was 'Noch-lak' of Kispiox, B. C. (50.9 cm x 38 cm). Langdon Kihn described her as a 'Medicine woman of the Wolf phratry of Kispuyoks, B. C.' She is wearing a medicine costume — 'Head-dress — twisted cedarbark. Necklace — the teeth of the grizzly bear. Strands of twisted cedar bark about neck. Button blanket.'



Captain Jack whose Indian name was 'Kwalah-Algyah' — Always Speaking (50.9 cm x 38 cm). Kihn wrote: "Tsimshian Indian, B. C. Medicine man . . . with grizzly bear claws and eagle quill head dress." The head-dress used in the medicine man's ceremony had dyed and undyed down (eagle or swan). The ceremonial neck ring, typical of the Northwest Coast, was woven of dyed and undyed cedar bark.

This splendid pair of water-colour drawings depicting husband and wife were made at Kispiox, B. C. in 1924.

The artist's handwriting on his photograph of Mrs Captain Jack reads: 'Her husband is also a medicine man who is stone blind. She is always seen leading him about. This sight common among those Indians. Great prevalence of blindness. "Medicine man" — strange word . . . Medicine men are not always doctors. Sometimes seers and prophets are called medicine men whereas they act more in the capacity of charmers and miracle workers.'

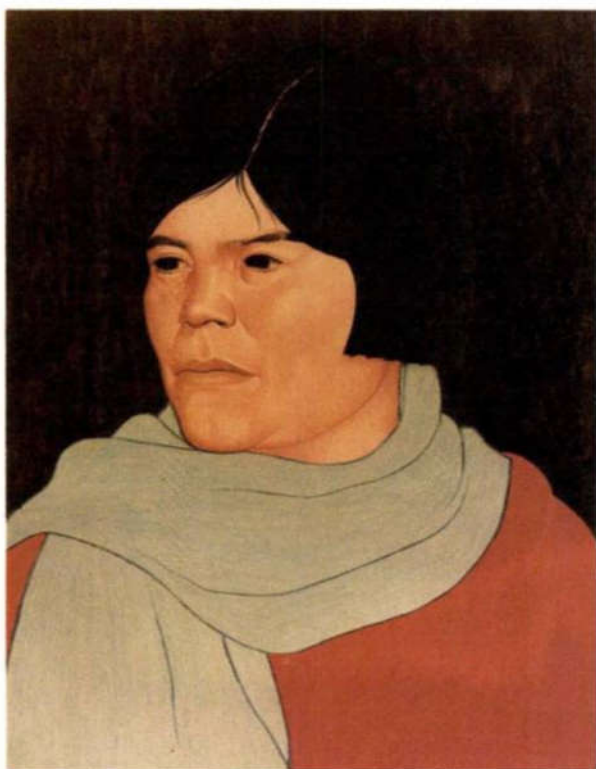
The portraits of the husband and wife were two of five original water-colour drawings of Indian subjects purchased by Sir Henry Wellcome on 20 January 1926. They remain in the collection of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine.

'Totems'. An oil painting of a Skeena scene c. 1924.



Vancouver Art Gallery

The portraits below were purchased by F. N. Southam who presented them to Lieutenant-Governor W. C. Nichol for his country home. Mr J. Nichol of Vancouver, a grandson, donated these and two other portraits by Kihn to the British Columbia Provincial Museum in 1984.



B. C. Provincial Museum

'Maggie Jackson, a Tsimshian Indian of Kisgagas and Bear Lake, British Columbia.'
(50.9 cm x 30 cm), c. 1924.



B. C. Provincial Museum

'Johnny William or Athlis of Raven Crest Babine Tribe from Babine Lake, British Columbia.'
(50.9 cm x 37.7 cm), c. 1924.

The poor attendance at Ottawa's showing of the West Coast Indian Art Exhibition evoked a strong response from Carr: 'It was a dead dismal failure. The big rooms with the pictures hanging in the soft, pleasant light were empty. The grand old totems with their grave, stern faces gazed tensely ahead alongside of Kihn's gay-blanketed Indians with their blind eyes. I was glad that they were blind. They would not see the humiliation.'

In Toronto and Montreal the show was well received. A review in *Saturday Night* read: 'Indian portraiture was stimulated in this country largely through the work of Langdon W. Kihn, the lively young artist from New York, who is represented in this collection. Two others were hung in the exhibition: Edwin Holgate of Montreal and Pegi Nicol of Ottawa. Both paint in distinct contrast to the two-dimensional, posterous style of Kihn, but neither have the startling colour effect or dreamlike quality.'

A second review also in *Saturday Night* said: 'Mr. Kihn's drawings of Indian types are strong but unpleasant in quality. The technique which he adopts is that invented by Nico Jungman thirty years ago in his treatment of Dutch fisherfolk, but it is used with a teutonic harshness and a lack of sensitiveness either for colour or character. The drawings, however, are valuable as careful and accurate records.'

From 1926 to 1930, perhaps earlier, Kihn received the enthusiastic support of Sir Henry Wellcome, founder of the London-based pharmaceutical empire and medical history institute which bear his name today. At that time Sir Henry was actively collecting material for his 'Wellcome Historical Medical Museum', and he acquired about ninety of Kihn's portraits. Langdon Kihn's career, according to his daughter Phyllis Kihn, 'might not have been what it was' without Henry Wellcome's interest.

Between 1929 and late 1931 Langdon Kihn, his wife, and their daughter, enjoyed an interlude in France and Spain (about which Kihn wrote for *National Geographic Magazine*, 'A Palette from Spain'). Upon travelling back to America the Kihns stopped in London, where Wellcome and Kihn had intended to organize a large survey of North American tribes, but word arrived from New York that the artist's father, Alfred C. Kihn, had suffered a stroke and the family immediately returned home.

After New York, the Kihns returned to their home in East Haddam, Connecticut, where Kihn illustrated books and periodicals. He painted the Nathan Hale Murals at the Nathan-Ray High School in Moodus, Connecticut and painted more portraits, including one of Connecticut's governor, Wilbur C. Cross.

In July, 1936, Kihn began a commission for the National Geographic Society that set him to painting oils for a series of seven articles about North American

tribes, written by Matthew W. Stirling, chief ethnologist at the Smithsonian Institution.

The Geographic Society wanted Kihn to 'combine artistic beauty with a wealth of accurate information'. This series appeared in its magazines of November 1937, November 1940, July 1944, January 1945, January 1946, February 1948, and October 1949. In doing the assignment, Kihn, his wife, and sometimes his daughter, travelled by car, by horse, by canoe, by bush plane and by foot. They stayed with Indian agents, Hudson's Bay Company traders, and missionaries; they slept in tents, huts, pueblos, teepees and plankhouses. They went to the Mackenzie River, the West Coast, the Aleutians, the Plains, the Grand Canyon, Arizona and New Mexico. Kihn painted thirty-five tribes for this series.

Later, Kihn assisted the National Geographic Society with its book *Indians of the Americas*, 1955; it displays 103 of the Society's Kihns.

In his later years Kihn taught art; he illustrated more books, more magazines; he also added New England landscapes to his portfolio of Indians, cowboys, Doukhobors, and his French and Spanish pictures. The National Geographic Society, 1950, and the American Museum of Natural History, 1952, honoured him with major exhibitions. Kihn died in 1957.

Today W. Langdon Kihn is not as well known as he should be. At least part of the failure in recognizing this artist must be attributed to the nationalism which prevailed in Canada while Kihn painted here; it may be fair to say that he was unduly eclipsed by his northern contemporaries — Emily Carr and the Group of Seven — and that Canada's taste has always sided with its land over its people, if only on canvas.

Kihn's art is scattered through the United States, England and Canada in small, isolated public and private collections; although sixty of his earlier pictures rest in the Edward Lyman Bill Collection at the Davison Art Center of Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut. A second, smaller collection of forty-five Indian works, plus the National Geographic's sketches, are at the Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Canada. And, in London, the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine retains seventeen early works of Kihn which initiated the interest of the authors in his career. ♦

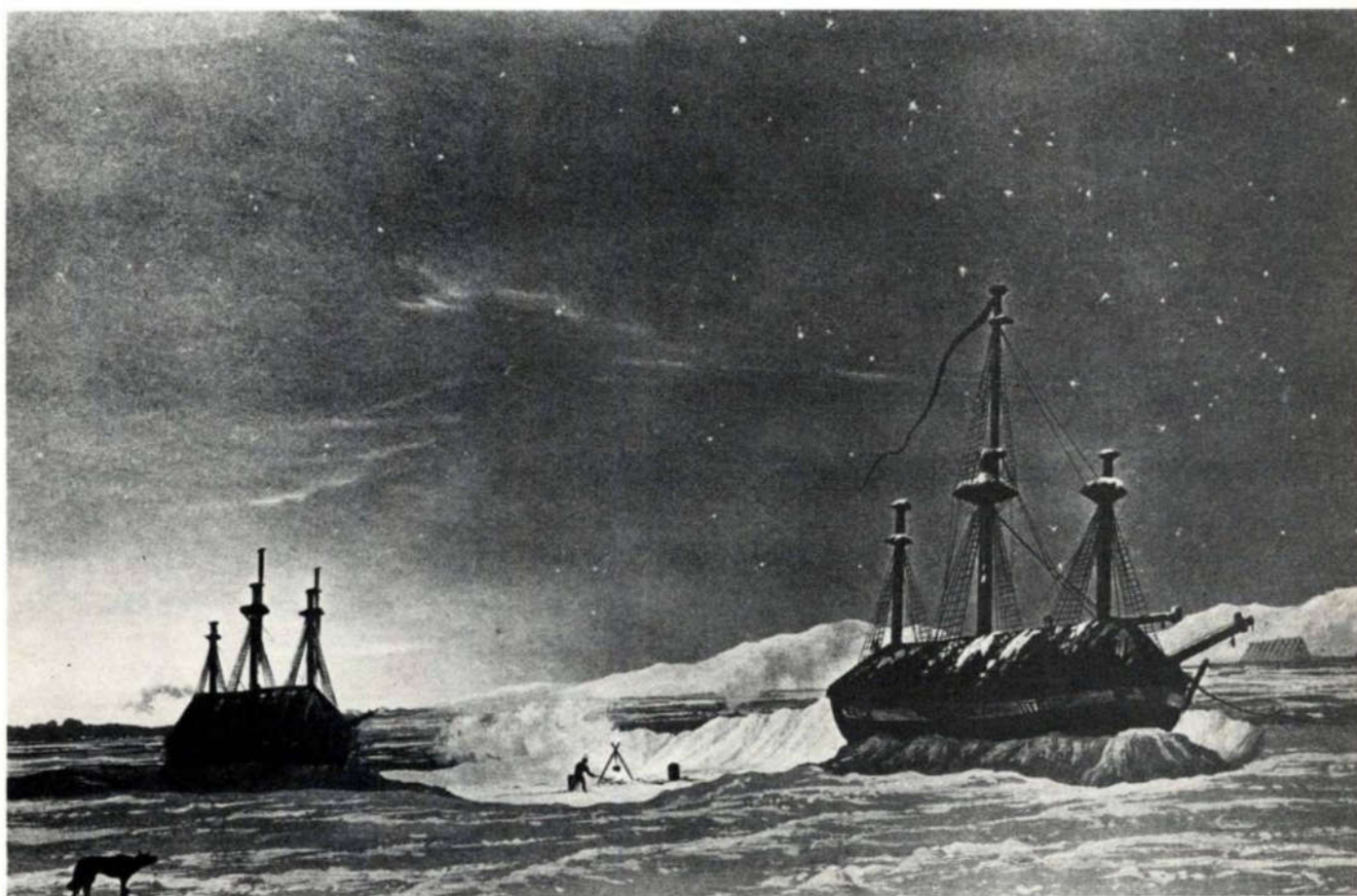
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are grateful for the assistance of the artist's daughter Phyllis Kihn of East Haddam, Connecticut; and Robin Price, Deputy Librarian, and William Schupbach, Curator of Iconographic Collections — both at the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London. Acknowledgements also to the British Columbia Provincial Museum and Vancouver's Art Gallery and Public Library; the Glenbow Museum; the Metropolitan Toronto Library Board and the Art Gallery of Ontario; the National Gallery of Canada; the corporate archives of CNR and Southams; and the Davison Art Center.

*Concerts, theatricals, cricket and football —
with ships frozen in for ten months of the year
ingenuity was needed to keep crews
mentally and physically fit.*

The Wintering-over of Royal Navy Ships in the Canadian Arctic, 1819-1876

By C. S. Mackinnon



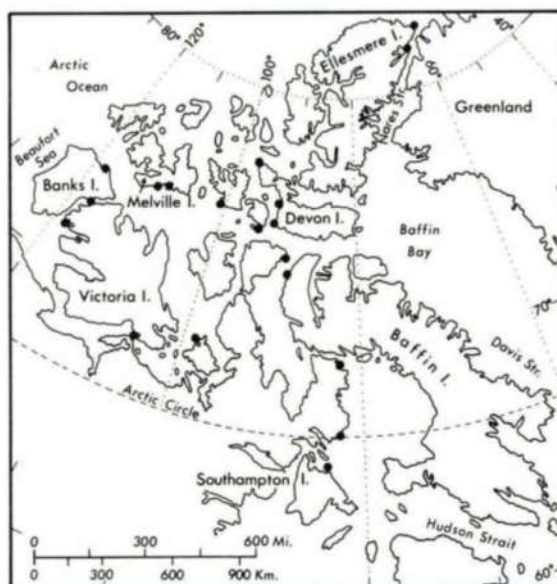
'H. M. Ships Hecla & Griper in Winter Harbour', Parry's expedition, 1819-20. Showing the ships banked up and covered for the winter. Engraving from a sketch made by Lieutenant F. W. Beechey. From Parry's 'Journal of a voyage ...' (London, 1821).

IN 1880 IN A LITTLE-NOTED ORDER IN COUNCIL, Great Britain transferred to Canada all claim to the Arctic Islands. Now that these territories are recognized as valuable, Canadians would do well to honour the memory of the old British sailors. Sovereignty is based on their perseverance. This article tells of official Navy expeditions which wintered over within what is now Canadian jurisdiction. The trips consciously conformed to a pattern and their techniques are best considered together.

In the nineteenth century three generations of British explorers spent winters in the Canadian Arctic: the three Parry voyages in the 1820s, the cluster of Franklin searches in the 1850s, and the Nares expedition in 1875. Twenty-four ships (counting different expeditions of the same ship) and over thirteen hundred Royal Navy personnel (again including repeats) were involved. Considering several extended trips, a statistician might talk of over two thousand 'man-winters'. As the accompanying map indicates this activity took place over a wide section of the Arctic Archipelago.

Although the voyages were a military enterprise, there was no attempt at secrecy. Indeed it was quite the opposite. Parliament printed the official reports of Franklin search expeditions. These are collectively known as the 'Arctic Blue Books'. This was done also for Nares in 1876. Most captains published popular accounts based on logs and diaries kept during the voyage. Then others, such as surgeons, would be permitted to publish their versions. Newspapers and letters composed on board also were offered to the public. The novelty of the environment prompted unusual attention to descriptions of the daily routine. A whole shelf of polar books was added to the literature of travel so beloved of the Victorians. In addition, over a dozen manuscript journals have been deposited in the National Maritime Museum, the Royal Geographical Society and the Scott Polar Institute. This article is based mainly on this unpublished material.

Captain William Edward Parry invented his system for wintering-over within an established framework. The ships, rank structure and discipline were the same wherever the Royal Navy served. The long Pacific voyages of Captain Cook and the weary blockading of Napoleon's Europe called forth imaginative efforts to break the tedium. Civilian whalers also were noted for doing scrimshaw in their spare time. The isolation, immobility, darkness and cold were new factors however. Regular work was minimized just as the surroundings encouraged unhealthy brooding. Despite a critical reappraisal by A.G.E. Jones, published in



Wintering-over of Royal Navy ships 1819-1876.

The Musk-Ox No. 21 (1978) Parry still deserves credit for conducting a happy, healthy expedition. Whether by innovation or adaptation he triumphed over adversity and set the pattern for wintering.

Officers eagerly volunteered for the Arctic. It was preferable to stagnating on half-pay with the great backlog from the Napoleonic wars. This was a chance for distinction and promotion. Much depended on the personal enthusiasm of the commander both for pushing the main purpose of each expedition and for setting the tone for the winter confinement. A definite school of polar officers was formed. Not only was there continuity of personnel within the clusters of trips in the 1820s and the 1850s but also between eras. The junior officers of one generation sometimes turned up as leaders of the next — for example, James Clark Ross, Austin and Nares. Because of the specialized nature of the service, officers formed an unusually high proportion of the complement. Occasional auxiliary steampower required new types of officers who 'scarce . . . ever had a silver spoon in their mouths or dined with gentlemen before they came into service'.

Some of the same factors operated in recruiting seamen. Weavers, unemployed in the post-Napoleonic depression, were glad to sign up for double pay with a six months' advance. Sailors, used to rough conditions at sea, soon learned that the death rate in the Arctic was usually less than in the tropics. When new trips were in the offing it was a simple device of 'taking the address of the best men on their being paid off from the last expedition'. More than medical fitness was desired; a broadsheet in 1850, by the experienced Captain Austin, proclaimed that, in addition to supporting the discipline of the British Navy, recruits were

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Illustrations selected by Clive Holland, Archivist at the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge University.

to pledge themselves to employ their 'best endeavours to promote the benefit, amusement and improvement of each other; and the general good of our little community' and 'to refrain from evil speaking . . . "growling", a term well understood throughout the service.'

Ideally there would be two identical ships with interchangeable parts. The vessels were specially strengthened to resist the pressures of the pack ice, displaced about 400 tons and usually carried a complement of sixty. The draft room at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich preserves the details of the arctic fitting-out of the various ships. The need to take three years' supplies in limited space suggested relatively small crews and topping up off Greenland. The captains' quarters were suitably impressive but a midshipman recalled: 'My kit was stowed in the drawers under the bed, books above under the beams, washing place with slop table over it, in the ship's side. There was room for one chair.'

Faced with ten months of being frozen in, captains sought in September an anchorage sheltered from the fearsome pressures of the polar pack ice. Often it was necessary to saw through the newly formed ice in order to reach a more suitable place. In October, the process of winterizing the ship would begin. 'Employed preparing for housing in, Hove up the Anchor. Furlled the sails upon the yards and covered them up for the winter and lashed the spars for the rafters in their places.' Stout awning material was then used to close in an area about twenty feet high. The deck was packed with eighteen inches of snow and 'a thick coating of ashes and gravel mixed with snow and made after the manner of mortar'. This provided insulation and made 'a hard and compact promenade'. Around the entire ship, snow was heaped up. This provided a welcome amount of work for the crew.

The greatest physical problem was condensation. Moisture from breathing, cooking, or drying damp clothing would collect on cold surfaces and come dripping down. The main defence against this was usually the Silvester stove and hot-air pipe system. Also, double doors on a single entry route, corking surfaces and careful prior shaking of outer garments and regulated laundry methods normally sufficed. Rather than bunks against the cold hull, hammocks were strung in the mid-deck area which was ventilated systematically.

Fire was always dreaded aboard ship. This was especially true in the Arctic where 'naked lights, stoves at night, and everything depending on flame of some sort or other seems to me to render us more liable to fire than ordinary ships!' Alongside the ship a four-foot-square firehole in the ice was chiselled open every half-hour. Rigidly enforced fire precautions, warning bells and a human chain to hand on wet blankets were spelled out in standing orders.

One of the strangest features was the absence of the sun for ninety days. This made all activities more difficult and was psychologically very trying. At noon a book facing south could barely be deciphered. This was the core of the winter season and ingenuity was focussed on getting through this black period. The darkness, cold and often featureless terrain combined to make losing one's way a serious danger. Sign posts on hills, rockets and search parties were necessary. The prolonged cold weather was novel as well. The returning sun often coincided with the coldest part of the year.

After Parry's second voyage there was a tendency to adopt some of the Inuit clothing styles at least for sledging expeditions away from the ship. In place of tight-fitting boots, moccasins with felt linings were used. By 1875, eider-down jackets were tried. Complete suits of skin clothing were often acquired en route at Greenland or were ordered in advance from the Hudson's Bay Company in Newfoundland. During the winter the seamen often sewed parts of their own apparel. 'Nose bags' were quite the vogue. Walking was done in pairs so that one could warn the other about frost-bite. They quickly learned that mere degrees of cold did not signify as much as wind chill.

The Royal Navy was waging a prolonged campaign against scurvy on extended voyages. The Arctic added the problem of acquiring fresh food. Cattle were slaughtered on first entering the ice and hung up in chunks along with the spoils of any local hunts. Red-hot saws were needed to sever frozen muskox joints. The main anti-scorbutic agent was known to be in lemon juice and the seamen were forced to swallow their daily portions in front of officers. Unfortunately the source and quality of lemons (sometimes confusingly called limes in the Royal Navy) changed after the 1850s and consequently, the Nares crews in 1875-76 suffered outbreaks of scurvy while sledging. Unless reduced rations were necessitated by emergencies, the food was adequate in bulk and varied enough to celebrate special occasions. Captains tried to secure the best tinned provisions and even grew cress and mustard in shallow boxes on the hot-air pipes.

Hunting provided energetic entertainment as well as some welcome fresh nourishment for the sportsmen and for the sick. The easiest to hunt were the musk-oxen: '... the animals apparently being quite bewildered, not knowing what to do, remained huddled together until they had all fallen.' The formidable polar bear was quite a different proposition. Most accounts highlight such adventures. There was great fear of being killed by bears. One man escaped by jumping a four-hundred-foot cliff. The rule was enforced that no one should walk alone or unarmed. Anything that moved was attacked: all birds, a seal at the firehole and even a tail-less little mouse. Arctic foxes were

Some of the regular activities carried out during the wintering-over of the British Arctic Expedition (Nares), 1875-76. From water-colour paintings by E. L. Moss, in the collection of the Scott Polar Research Institute.



'Alert. Winter Quarters. 27 December 1875. Daily Routine'. Digging out ice for cooking and washing.



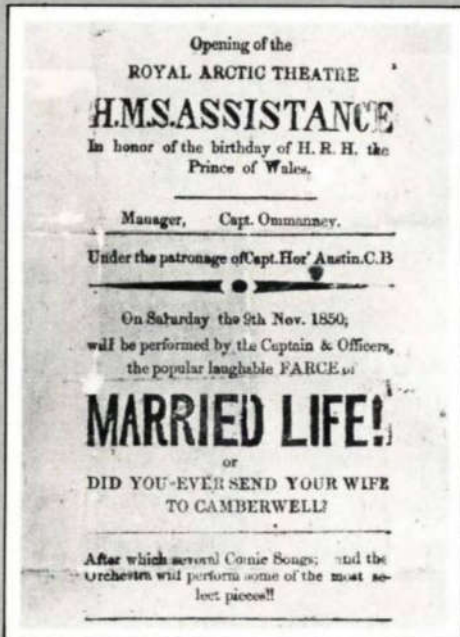
'Unifiler House. Jan. 1876'. Magnetic observatory inside a snow hut.



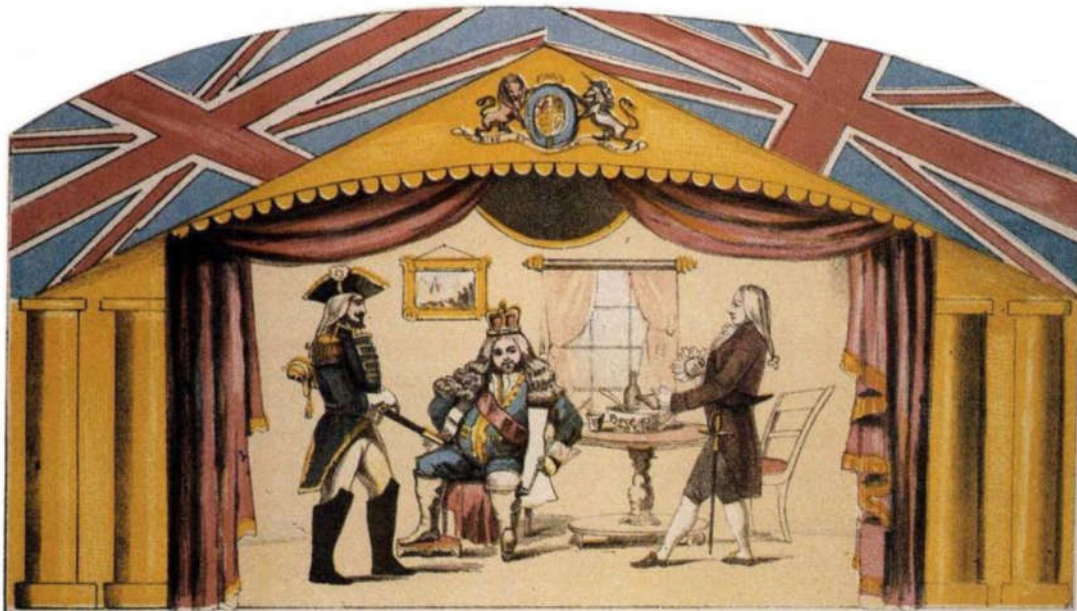
'Serving out Lime juice. 5 bells forenoon'.

Music and theatricals were two forms of entertainment which helped to keep up crew morale during the long, dark, arctic winter. At right: Parry's barrel organ, taken on his expeditions of 1819-20 and 1821-23, and possibly others.

Scott Polar Research Institute Museum



Part of a theatre programme printed on silk on board H M S 'Assistance', Austin's expedition, 1850-51. This was probably the first arctic expedition to carry its own printing press.



'Royal Arctic Theatre: Scene from "Bombastes Furioso"'. Austin's expedition, 1850-51. Illustration by G. F. McDougall in 'Illustrated Arctic News' (facsimile edition, London, 1852).



'H. M. S. Assistance and Pioneer in Winter Quarters. Returning daylight'. Belcher's expedition, 1852-54. Lithograph from a painting by W. W. May.

trapped in considerable numbers. Some were released with copper collars inscribed with messages for the lost Franklin expedition. Others became pets, living nervously with the more traditional terriers or Newfoundland dogs. A captain on Austin's 1850 expedition remarked, 'It was great fun to-day to see the Old Comd cruising round the squadron to get a good looking gentleman Fox for his lady Fox, in order to get a breed.'

As these were official expeditions, the crews were under naval discipline. Despite three months of darkness, the normal routine continued as much as possible. With minor variations the following summary of winter orders for H. M. S. *Assistance* in 1850-51 is typical:

- 6:00 Lash up hammocks
- 6:15 All hands on deck, ventilate lower deck
- 7:45 Public prayers
- 8:00 Breakfast, wind up chronometers, rota of washing, air one quarter of bedding
- 11:20 All in off the ice, sound the Gong
- 11:30 Issue lime juice
- Noon Pipe to dinner
- 12:30 Grog
- 4:00 All in off the ice, Gong

- 5:00 Pipe to supper
- 5:45 Walk on deck, ventilate lower deck
- 6:30 School, except for visiting on Thursdays and Saturdays when hands to dance and Sky Lark
- 8:30 Hang up hammocks
- 9:00 Lights out on lower deck

Cleaning up, checking stores, fetching freshwater ice from nearby lakes or icebergs and removing drifted snow did not, by any means, fully occupy the men. Officers feared that idleness would cause physical and mental problems. Exercise in the open air was an obvious answer. Sometimes this was rather unstructured. Several captains simply turned their men out onto the ice to amuse themselves. An officer on McClure's epic Northwest Passage expedition considered, 'This plan of allowing them to choose their own way of spending Seven hours a day in the open Air, is much preferable to employing them at useless hard work'. Ice pillars were set up at close intervals to form a half-mile path usable in bad light. During stormy weather, an able seaman recorded, 'We have

been compelled to complete our quantum of exercise in a monotonous tramp on the upper deck'.

Not surprisingly, the British instinct for games resulted in cricket, football and rounders being played. One crew had a skittles-alley inside a 'Crystal Palace'; another made a billiards table out of freshwater ice. More Canadian-style pursuits like skating, snowshoeing, tobogganing and dogsledding were indulged in occasionally. There is even an intriguing reference to a game of 'bat-and-ball' involving 'falls and thumps'.

As early as the second Parry expedition, schools were established for the seamen after supper. The government supplied the books and the officers donated the pens and paper. Under dedicated teachers like William Mogg, this contributed 'in a very high degree, to the constant, yet sober cheerfulness'. In 1848, McClintock observed: 'The degree of zeal and attention all these men display is as astonishing as it is praiseworthy. They tuck their sleeves up, square their elbows, draw in a long breath, and go at the pot hooks and hangers, like men bent on conquest'. As the century progressed, basic literacy became more widespread and attention could be focussed on such skills as navigation so that seamen might qualify for better jobs.

Officers had a very different lifestyle. They did not have to conform to a rigid schedule. Lemon juice, walks and lights out were optional. In addition to normal responsibilities, each adopted some scientific speciality. This tendency saw non-naval appointees on the Nares expedition of 1875-76. Much record keeping was involved. Peculiarities of aurora and northern animals were noted. Observatories in snow houses were constructed. An officer had a 'house warming' party in one at thirty-three degrees below zero. Extreme cold made instruments painful to touch and liable to mist over with breath. The freezing point of various substances provided amusement — such as firing bullets of solid mercury into boards. More useful was a telegraph strung between ships. A 'Loyal Circle of Arctic Engineers' read scientific papers to each other.

Tastes differed in the matter of reading. Despite libraries of over a thousand volumes some read very little due to poor lighting, distracting activities or disinterest. Others tackled Gibbon and Shakespeare and even studied 'the language of the Incas'. Whist was a popular pastime. When ships wintered in close proximity, a great deal of visiting took place. One officer recorded in his diary, 'I can not stand this going out every night'.

These expeditions attracted keen officers with interesting backgrounds. The Frenchman, Emile de Bray, serving on the *Resolute* in 1852-53, wisely reflected, '... chacun devra s'efforcer de maintenir le bonheur général de la communauté et l'on verra la nécessité d'éviter tous les sujets de conversation qui pourraient causer de l'irritation ou des différences d'opinion'.

Usually Nelson's band of brothers maintained the tradition of never speaking discouragingly while on the Queen's business. A noteworthy exception was Belcher who 'made a "hell afloat" of every ship he ever commanded'. Also on the long isolated voyages of McClure and Collinson, the strain began to tell: 'Nothing to do and therefore they must quarrel'.

Newspapers were tried on a few occasions. Parry's officers printed the *North Georgia Gazette and Winter Chronicle* on a regular press. During the Austin expedition several manuscript papers appeared with beautiful colour drawings, most notably the *Illustrated Arctic News*. In a tight little community where nearly everything was already known, forced humour and some artificiality resulted. It was difficult to avoid boring people or hurting their feelings. Clements Markham recalled: 'But there was worse than Russian censorship on that wintry ice pack. The number was confiscated by the Commodore, and both the *Gleaner* and the *Minavilins* were suppressed. When I went and asked old Austin to let me have my newspaper, he said that it had been put into the scran bag'.

Music was less controversial. Parry's original barrel organ survives in excellent condition in the Scott Polar Institute in Cambridge. Such organs were often donated by well-wishers at the Admiralty. Officers had violin concerts. At first the men made flutes out of curtain rods and drums from pots. Odd assemblages of instruments approximated 'orchestras'. By the last expedition things were quite sophisticated with Aldrich in great demand at the piano. The rationale for all such activities was preventing scurvy, the experts being convinced that 'the condition of the mind' was as important as diet and exercise.

Perhaps the most famous entertainments were the elaborate theatricals staged in this exotic environment. Finding a suitable place for the performance was difficult. A crowd between decks might create a vapour fog while the upper deck could be bitterly cold. Eventually a theatre was constructed out of ice and snow near the ship. The stage settings progressed from crude improvisations to elaborate props worthy of Drury Lane. The carpenter, William Dean, in the 1850s, was very skilled indeed. Aside from wood and fabrics, he could display ice statues with no fear of their melting. Costumes for women's roles were a real challenge on the first trip but the next time 'a Committee of Ladies at Bath... sent a large supply of antiquated left off apparel'. Appearing in such dress required physical as well as moral fortitude: 'Several of the ladies complained of frost bites in their lower extremities, one of whom nearly lost a few toes, the temperature of the stage being 20 degrees below zero, or 52 degrees of freezing'.

Since, at first, all the roles were played by officers, there was pressure to participate. Later, the men put

ILLUSTRATED ARCTIC NEWS.

N° 2.

TUTO ET SINE METU.

NOVEMBER 30. 1850.



® *AD R.* The flattering encomiums so bountifully showered on our first essay in the Editorial line we deeply appreciate, and heartily thank you for—

We feel it was the more kindly meant in so far that the merit of the *Arctic News*, lay mainly in the able M.S. with which you so generously answered our call.

Rest assured, it shall not be our fault if we fail in continuing to give general satisfaction, and we sincerely trust, all our future endeavours will be as warmly received and as generously interpreted.

Contributors, we have a favor to ask—that you concede to us the right of repeating without comment, any Publications adjudged to be well adapted for the Columns of our Periodical.—and furthermore, to ensure the utmost impartiality at our hands we request that all Letters, Poetry, &c. intended for publication, be placed in the Editor's Box,—signed with some feigned name; to which the Writer shall if possible constantly adhere, and the more the writing is disguised, (provided it be legible) the better.

As occupation and exercise for pen and mind is our object,—originality in all Articles is a

sine qua non.



Title page from 'Illustrated Arctic News', winter newspaper of Austin's expedition, 1850-51.
Facsimile edition published in London, 1852.

on plays of their own. Apparently, naval discipline prevented mixed casts of officers and men.

As the whole purpose of the performance was to distract and to cheer up everyone, the choices were most often popular, recent farces such as *High Life Below Stairs*, and *A Miss in her Teens*. Occasionally, the crew felt patronized by such thin theatre fare. McClintock, on the *Intrepid* in 1853, noted, 'This winter the men have set their minds upon having a "real play", they hold mere farces in contempt...' The *Taming of the Shrew* was thus a wise choice. Less suitable may have been the performance of the sombre *Hamlet* by the seamen on Belcher's ships.

Of special interest are the few plays composed on the spot. Parry, on his first voyage, produced a piece of wish-fulfilment entitled *The North-West Passage or the Voyage Finished*. The last expedition, frozen in near the top of Ellesmere, was less purposeful in staging an *Original Pathetico-Comico Burlesque Operetta, the Little Vulgar Boy or Weeping Bill*. At the opening and closing of theatre seasons, officers could declaim a few lines of suitable doggerel.

Variety sustained the enthusiasm. Great fun was had secretly preparing for masquerades. A captain could appear as 'an itinerant chair mender, carrying his bundle of rushes. The costumes of the officers varied very much, from Boadicea to the Grand Seigneur; the men were more devoted to the imitation of pirates fearfully armed and whiskered, chimney sweeps, jim crows, and "merry andrews"'. A Royal Arctic Casino, an *Intrepid* Saloon, magic lantern shows, recitations with sing-songs, opera, 'Pops', magician shows and a grand pantomime complete with 'bears, thermometers, frostbite, nip, etc.' enlivened the arctic night.

Special days also helped to break any monotony. Trafalgar was marked by patriotic songs and flag waving around an ice statue of Britannia. Similarly crews competed to see which ship could produce the best Guy Fawkes. The day of days was Christmas. Carefully hoarded meats and puddings were eaten with great good humour amid splendid decorations. As was naval custom, the rank structure was reversed for the day. One officer remarked of his visit to the mess-tables of the lower deck, 'Nothing could be more comfortable (not even had we been on the home station)'.

One is struck by the religious tone of the books and diaries. Official daily prayers and Sunday services were more than a routine. Franklin, for instance, was noted for his fervent sermons. A chief purpose of the schools was to make every man acquainted with his Bible. Perhaps their bleak, dramatic surroundings reminded them of the power of God. Certainly the rare funerals were thought-provoking. A solemn procession trekked to the nearby land and a shallow grave was hacked out of the permafrost. McClintock reflected, '... the mortal remains of poor Coombes will remain as did

the frozen Mammoth of the Lena'. The captain's log records the historic practice, 'Sold before the Mast the Effects of the Late Thos. Coombe'. Of such an occasion de Bray remarked, 'Jamais je n'ai vu plus lugubre spectacle'. Fortunately the sea burial of Wilkie in 1853 coincided with the reappearance of the sun, 'a truly glorious emblem of the resurrection'.

The return of the sun, usually in early February, was eagerly anticipated. Men climbed nearby hills, icebergs or masts to catch the first glimpse of the golden orb protruding over the horizon of their frozen world. This was a favourite subject for etchings and paintings. Even though this event often coincided with the coldest part of the winter, spirits lifted and thoughts raced ahead to the more active spring sledging season. By the end of February, the final curtain fell on the time-consuming theatricals. Editors concluded, 'Exertion of a more active nature than that of Quill and Pencil calls us'. The snow embankment was removed from around the ship, several sledging patrols set out in various directions and all naval personnel rejoiced in the coming freedom from immobility. A sense of purpose returned.

A definite tradition developed over the course of these many expeditions. The participants consciously conformed to a pattern in wintering-over. For example, before embarking on his five-year voyage in the *Enterprise*, Captain Collinson affirmed that Parry's memoirs were the indispensable 'foundation'. When the Arctic Theatre was reopened in November 1875, this prologue was recited:

Yet once again, for none would here forget
We are but sons of fathers living yet;
In work and play alike, we but renew
The deeds of men who taught us what to do.

Perhaps brilliant improvisation did degenerate into expected routine. Yet this could not disguise the unusual spectacle of a fighting service recruiting on the principles of a vaudeville troupe. 'Can you sing or dance? or what can you do for the amusement of others?' were questions invariably addressed to candidates for arctic service. This led their chief contemporary critic, Dr Richard King, to sneer that even the alleged purpose of finding Franklin was being forgotten while officers played at theatricals and other 'merry andrew' pranks in order to produce a book in spite of the sterility of their surroundings.

The most serious modern criticism of these old Royal Navy expeditions has been their failure to adapt to the arctic environment as seen in the lifestyles of the native peoples. In the best scholarly account, Professor Wallace is at some pains to contrast ponderous ships with light snowshoe exploits by John Rae or small boat trips on the Back River. This follows Stefansson's argument that rigid-minded navy men starved in a friendly



'Situation of H. M. Ships Fury & Hecla, at Igloolik, 1822-23'. Parry's expedition, 1821-23. Showing winter recreation and guide-lines between ships. Engraving from a drawing by G. F. Lyon. From Parry's 'Journal of a second voyage . . .' (London, 1824).

Arctic because they refused to 'go native' — spread out in sustainable numbers, wear caribou skins and eat raw seal. Much of this can be admitted readily but a few other points need to be made.

Far northern history is hard to fit into the standard accounts of Canadian development; witness the prestigious multi-volume Canadian Centenary Series which simply ignores the Franklin saga despite northern and pro-British experts as editors (W. L. Morton and D. G. Creighton). The Arctic was reached direct from Europe by-passing the centuries-long learning experience of the advance through the river systems of Canada. The few expeditions along the continental shore met Inuit, and Parry's winterings in the mid-1820s saw friendly interchange of technology. But to the north and west of Baffin Island the white men were essentially on their own. At first, the Royal Navy expected simply to sail from the Atlantic through to the Pacific. Big ships were necessary. The search operations in the 1848-1855 period and the scientific expedition of 1875, were also assumed to be one-shot affairs. There did not seem to be any point in drastically changing naval routine. After all, the Admiralty wanted to pull out of the Arctic, functioning units of the national defence system.

The climate determined that the ships would be frozen in for ten months of the year; the usual latitude meant darkness for three months. The problem was how to winter-over a large body of men in one such place. Prolonged waiting was unavoidable and morale had to be maintained in depressing surroundings. Given these circumstances, the Parry system made sense. Those, like Austin, who meticulously followed the complete pattern, had the happiest, healthiest crews. Others, like J. C. Ross or McClure, who minimized the 'entertainments' inflicted boredom and melancholy on their men. There is still something to be learned in the art of 'man management' from these old expeditions. At the very least it is a fascinating piece of social history, a vignette of Victorian Britain frozen in time as well as place.

These intrepid seamen, so far from their normal habitat, laid bare the outlines of the Arctic Archipelago. Their legacy is more than an arid legal claim to sovereignty, however valuable today. Without harming natives, they earned their polar medals with the distinctive white ribbon. Canada should appropriate into the national history this peaceful bit of imperialism with its heroism and romance. Indeed it is the classic age of exploration in the North. ♦

Nahanni Gold

By Kerry Abel

Kerry Abel was born in Mayo, Yukon Territory, and grew up in several northern mining communities. She holds a Ph.D. from Queen's University, and teaches Canadian history at the University of Manitoba.

THE SOUTH NAHANNI RIVER, cascading through the Mackenzie Mountains of the Northwest Territories to meet the Liard River, has held a particular fascination for many Canadians over the years. Tales of murdered men and evil spirits in 'Headless Valley'; rumours of mysterious tropical vegetation in remote canyons; and accounts of cliffs, caves and waterfalls provide the elements of a unique northern mythology.

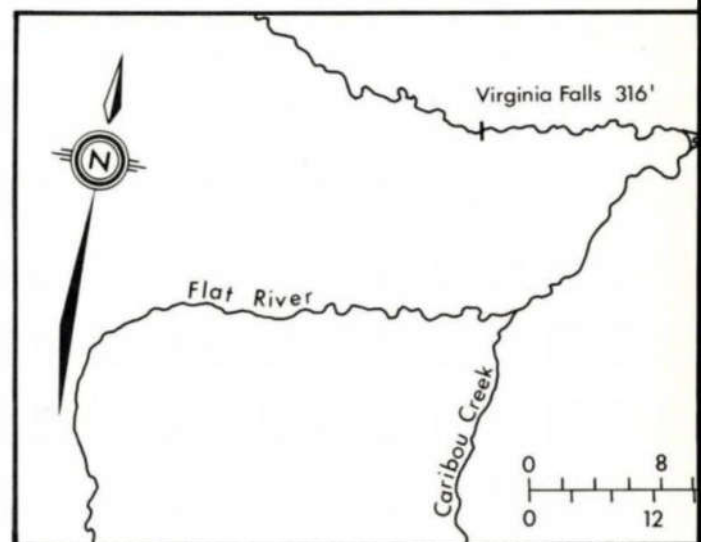
Perhaps the most persistent of the legends was the belief that hidden in the remote valley was an enormous deposit of gold. Promoted with gusto by the *Edmonton Journal*, it brought a flurry of activity to one of Canada's least known areas during the 1920s and early 1930s.

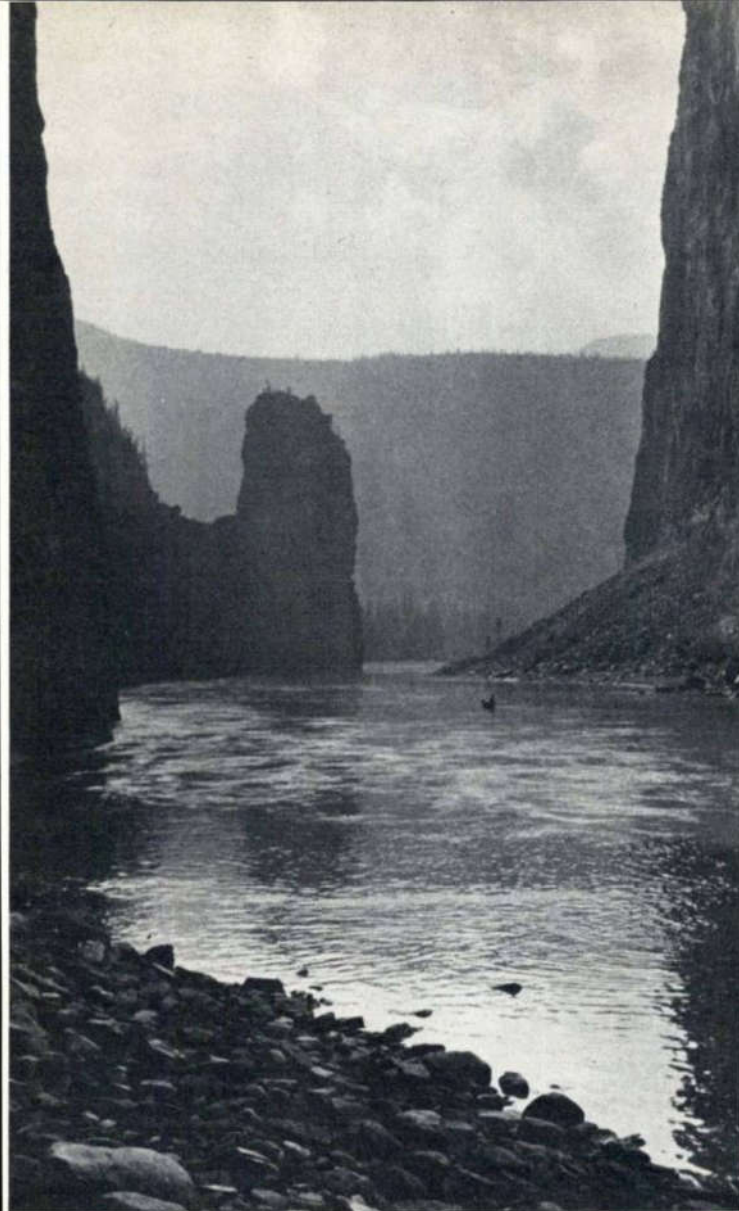
Interest in the gold potential of the Northwest Territories was generated largely after the initial euphoria of the Klondike Rush had begun to dissipate. At the height of the excitement, Edmonton newspapers and the Department of the Interior in Ottawa had actively promoted the so-called 'all-Canadian' route to the Yukon gold fields. The route involved departure from Edmonton, then a difficult trek northward via the Mackenzie River system and along a variety of alternate access rivers — in spite of the scoffing of many Klondikers themselves, and reports from the Hudson's Bay Company and the Geological Survey regarding the treacherous nature of such routes. According to the Dominion Land Agent at Edmonton, over 2,000 left that point between August 1897 and June 1898 — at a time when Edmonton's permanent population was somewhat under 2,000. Many were disappointed and left the North, never to return. Many others left the Klondike still convinced that there was gold elsewhere in the North. The fast rivers of the mountains, often originally visited as potential routes to the Yukon fields, were popular places to search. Among them was the South Nahanni.

It was the disappearance of brothers William and Frank McLeod which brought the Nahanni River first to 'outside' attention. Sons of Trader Murdoch McLeod of the Hudson's Bay Company, the two had abandoned the fur trade and travelled into the Nahanni Valley in

1903 or 1904 in search of that elusive treasure. At least two trips were made up the Flat River, a major tributary of the South Nahanni, but when the brothers failed to return after a third season, another brother named Charlie determined to search for them. Some ninety miles up the Nahanni River, two badly decomposed bodies were found, along with a gold watch and case identified as possessions of the McLeods. Charlie, convinced of foul play, contacted the Royal North West Mounted Police at Fort Smith. In August 1909, Corporal Arthur H. Mellor departed with a small patrol to investigate, and concluded that the men had probably starved to death after losing their equipment in a boating accident.

As far as Charlie and many others were concerned, however, the case was far from closed. When the police investigated the death of prospector Martin Jorgensen six years later, rumours began to fly. It was reported that all three bodies had been discovered to be headless; that they had been murdered by Indians because they had discovered fabulous gold deposits; that evil spirits were roaming the Nahanni. The police could insist on death by natural causes all they pleased; the local residents claimed to know better.





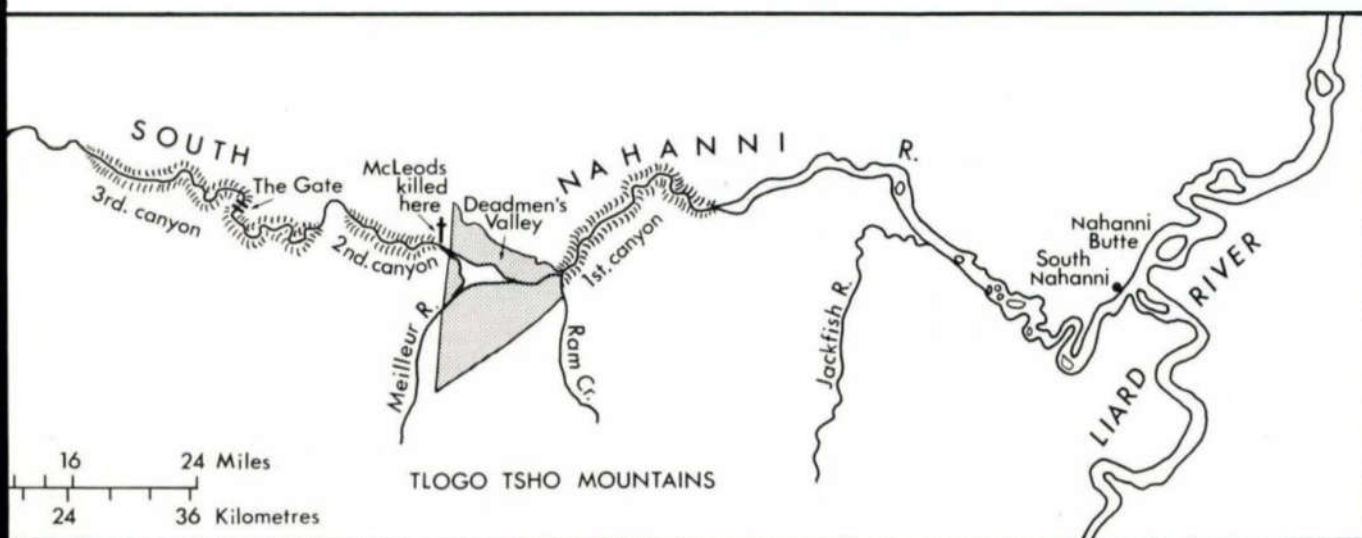
The Gate, looking downstream.

So the search for the legendary gold began. Many prospectors supported their activities by trapping, for the Nahanni had a reputation as good marten country. In fact, as fur prices rose during the 1920s, it seemed the prospectors had found the real secret to the Nahanni's wealth. Little else seemed to have been exploitable.

But then in March 1922, a brief article appeared rather inconspicuously in the *Edmonton Journal*. Mr A. Raftos Canning, a forest ranger, had learned 'from a very reliable source' that a placer strike had been made in the South Nahanni. 'At the present time,' the note continued, 'it is impossible to state the exact extent of the find, but it is thought by men who know the country that it will be of considerable importance.' Readers of the *Journal* and those in touch with the northern grapevine quickly took the hint, and traveller Fullerton Waldo recorded that a number of hopefuls immediately departed for the area from Fort Smith.

Two weeks later, Ottawa received its first news of the stories. L.T. Burwash, mining recorder for the territories, wrote to O.S. Finnie at the Department of the Interior that 'no definite word has reached us here concerning it and any reports you may hear now have reached the outside by letters of which we know nothing.' Finnie had, in fact, heard nothing previous to this letter, but was pleasantly surprised upon its receipt, and responded, 'It is hoped . . . there may be some truth in the rumour.'

The source of the excitement was Poole Field, an independent fur trader and long-time resident of the area. He had arrived at Fort Simpson with a number of samples of what he believed to be gold-bearing quartz which he had collected about sixty miles upriver from Nahanni Butte. As Inspector Fletcher of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police at Fort Fitzgerald reported to his commanding officer, 'There has been quite a little local excitement about this strike and all the local



people have either been up to stake or are going up to stake in the near future.

'There will probably be a small local rush in the spring and of course there is the possibility of this news getting outside and causing a large rush but you will be in a better position to estimate the possible size of a rush from the outside than I am.

'Sgt Thorne [Fort Simpson detachment] informs me that Field is confident he has made a big discovery.'

Although Fletcher's commanding officer forwarded the report to Ottawa, he was scarcely convinced of its utility. 'I have not allowed this information to become public,' he noted, 'as I do not wish to create a rush into that country upon such meagre evidence.' The South Nahanni was a dangerous river for amateurs, and the police were not anxious for a year of rescuing victims. So the news was filed away.

The *Edmonton Journal*, however, did not feel constrained by lack of evidence, and began regular coverage of the 'Big Event' on page one. A strike was 'confirmed' by the paper on 8 April 1922. An interview with Superintendent Jennings of the RCMP was printed a week later, in which Jennings dismissed the story as yet another in a series of annual rumours with no significance. Nevertheless, when news leaked that the government was sending a survey party to the headwaters of the Sikanni River to locate a base line for further surveys, the paper immediately jumped to the conclusion that Ottawa had officially recognized the veracity of the stories. The ever-optimistic newspaper neglected to mention that only a few claims had actually been recorded.

The Department of the Interior was also intrigued by the possibilities of new gold fields in the North. Fortuitously, Charles Camsell of the Department of Mines received, at that point, a letter from a wealthy American acquaintance named Fenley Hunter, in which Hunter proposed the undertaking of some exploration in the Northwest Territories at his personal expense. Camsell immediately suggested that Hunter travel the South Nahanni, which had not yet been visited by the Geographical Survey. Camsell had been interested in this little-known river since his boyhood at Forts Simpson and Liard, so he recognized the opportunity to obtain more reliable evidence regarding placer gold possibilities there. Hunter readily agreed, and reached Fort Simpson by canoe on 24 July 1928.

The expedition's original plan was to ascend the river, portage overland to the Gravel (Keele) River and return via the Mackenzie. Low summer water and complete lack of exciting prospecting convinced Hunter to turn back after reaching the great falls 122 miles upstream, which he named in honour of his daughter, Virginia. Hunter was convinced that the gold story was only an inflated rumour.

The *Edmonton Journal*, once again, was not prepared to abandon hope. On 16 March 1929, a large



Virginia Falls. Photograph by Frank Grant for Travel Arctic, Government of the Northwest Territories.

An unidentified group of gold-seekers who took part in the Nahanni gold rush, 1922.



Charles Camsell of the Department of Mines. Having spent his boyhood at Forts Simpson and Liard, he was considerably interested in reports reaching him from the North.



Winnipeg Free Press Collection, Manitoba Archives



Western Canada Aviation Museum Collection, Manitoba Archives

Fairchild and Fokker Super Universal aircraft owned by Northern Aerial Minerals Exploration Ltd., at Fort Simpson in 1928 during the aerial survey of the district.

headline proclaimed 'Gold Stampedes to Rush Nahanni Area in Spring'. It had learned that a Toronto-based concern named Northern Aerial Minerals Exploration Limited (N.A.M.E.) had flown a number of prospectors into the valley, constructed a base at Nahanni Butte, and contracted for a number of aerial surveys along the Flat River. The company's efforts were based primarily on advice received from Poole Field.

The *Journal* was thrilled. For the first time since the Klondike, great doings seemed to be afoot. And of course, Edmonton stood to gain considerably, as the jumping-off point for this 'Second Great Gold Rush'. In spite of the fact that the 'discovery' existed exclusively in the minds of some old-time prospectors and Edmonton boosters, the *Journal* warmed to the possibilities. Its reporter wrote:

Land of terror and mystery, where the bones of slain prospectors have lain bleaching in the snow and sun for two decades, land haunted by horror and strange tales of witchcraft and torture, the Nahanni is to have the veil which has shrouded it

for 25 years, torn aside by the thousands who will stampede into that country this summer in search of the gold which is said to be in the gravel in the creeks and rivers.

Even now the stampede is underway, according to W.H. 'Professor' Wrigley... who arrived in the city from Toronto on Friday to take part in what he says is going to be the greatest stampede in mining history...

'Why,' Wrigley went on, his eyes blazing with excitement, 'we got 48 colours in one pan. The dust was such big stuff that you could hear it tinkle.... Maybe you're wondering why I'm spilling all this stuff to you?' Wrigley asked. 'Well, the country is rich and big enough to have 10,000 men go in there.'

This incredible article goes on to relate the old McLeod story, claiming wildly in the process that the brothers had taken out \$8,000 worth of gold dust before their 'murders'.

It was all amazing nonsense. But Ottawa was alarmed. Memos filled with proposals for new RCMP



Pilots and engineers of Northern Aerial Minerals Exploration Ltd., at Winnipeg in 1928.



Wilfrid Reid 'Wop' May, Canada's legendary bush pilot, taken c.1933 about the time he was flying into the South Nahanni Valley for the Fort Simpson syndicate of which he was a part.

Richardson Archives, Canadian Airways Ltd., Manitoba Archives

detachments, a Nahanni mining recorder and extra forest-fire equipment circulated rapidly from office to office. But after a month, with no claims actually filed at Fort Smith, the Department of the Interior grew more cautious. Exactly what was going on?

Wisely, O.S. Finnie finally contacted both the district agent at Fort Smith and the director of Northern Aerial Minerals Exploration Limited in Toronto, asking for details. The word from Fort Smith was that although the exploration company had indeed staked some claims in the summer of 1928, it had decided not to bother recording them after mining engineer R.D. Adams inspected the findings and declared them worthless.

And the president of the company squelched all the rumours definitively. 'Our party was got up rather in a hurry,' he explained to Finnie, 'and the men were not the best we might have picked for the work. . . . Their talk with the *Edmonton Journal* is about 100% "bunk" and so little truth in it, that the Nahanni country is not included in this season's work at all.'

Ottawa could breathe a sigh of relief. The expensive prospect of expanding services into a remote area no longer seemed to threaten. Once again, concern with the Nahanni was dropped.

And once again, the eternally optimistic prospectors were undeterred. Four years later, the *Edmonton Journal* on 8 December 1933 boasted the enormous page-one headline, 'New Gold Rush Excites North'. A reporter sent to Fort Smith to cover the event proclaimed, 'Sensational rumors of fabulously rich gold deposits in the mysterious Nahanni country, prevalent since the McLeod brothers, prospectors, died mysteriously in Deadman's Valley 29 years ago, are finally expected to crystallize.' A depression-weary Canada might certainly welcome the diversion.

The stories were exaggerated; the find was linked mysteriously to a map allegedly produced by the unfortunate McLeod brothers; but at last, traces of gold had indeed been found. An aging Klondiker named Jack Stanier and his partner Bill Clark (once an HBC employee) had flown into the area which they believed to have been the site of the McLeod claim and, according to Bill Clark's diary, managed to 'pan a few colours'.

Poole Field also visited the claim, and Clark recorded, 'Poole Field, who had been through the Klondyke rush, said surface indications were better than some of the best creeks there, so our find looks to be a breadwinner.'

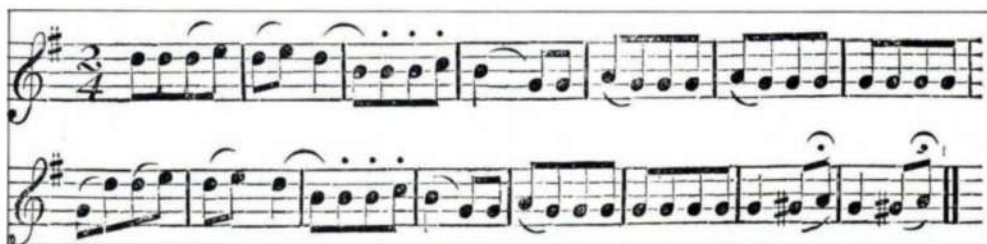
A syndicate was formed of local people at Fort Simpson with contacts in Ontario and elsewhere to finance the venture. Pioneer aviators Stan McMillan and 'Wop' May were even involved at one point. The company never succeeded in making wealthy men of any of its members. But the local prospectors felt vindicated. At least a trace of gold had finally been confirmed in 'their' valley.

The 'Great Nahanni Gold Rush', which provided excitement periodically over a span of ten years, may in fact constitute one of the resource frontier's greatest 'non-events'. Yet it did bring a new population element into a remote area hitherto the domain of the Dene, Hudson's Bay Company traders and a handful of missionaries. And it did succeed in bringing one of the last unknown regions of Canada to the attention of southerners. The constant campaign of promoting the northern frontier in *Edmonton's* newspaper provides another fascinating chapter in the history of Canadian interest in the North. Finally, although legends of lone prospectors seem to fit the patterns of the traditional frontier image, the fact that the mineral resource was finally exploited by a co-operative association belies the traditional assumption of hardy individualism among those pioneers. Clearly, much remains to be learned about the relationship between Canadians and their northern lands. ♦

Professor Ross is with the department of geography, Bishop's University, Lennoxville, Quebec. He has written numerous articles on whaling in Hudson Bay, and is editor of 'An Arctic Whaling Diary: the Journal of Captain George Comer in Hudson Bay 1903-1905'.



'Eskimaux Children Dancing. Igloolik, 1823'. From Captain W. E. Parry's 'Journal of a Second Voyage for the Discovery of a North-west Passage'. Drawing by Captain G. F. Lyon.



The 'most tuneful' of the three Eskimo songs that Captain Parry heard at Winter Harbour. The termination, he wrote, 'which is abrupt and fanciful, is usually accompanied by a peculiar motion of the head, and an expression of archness in the countenance which cannot be described by words.'

The Sound of Eskimo Music

By W. Gillies Ross

Had the graphophone out the evening and got a couple of records of native songs. One of them was of the Kiackennuckmiut. The other was Iwillic.

CAPTAIN GEORGE COMER of East Haddam, Connecticut, made the above notation in his daily journal on 7 November 1903, when on board the whaling schooner *Era* frozen into young ice at Fullerton Harbour in northwestern Hudson Bay. Although probably unaware of it at the time he had just made the earliest sound recordings among any Eskimo people in North America.

In our era of stereophonic and quadraphonic sound, it is easy to overlook the fact that the techniques of recording and reproducing sound are little more than a century old. In 1877, close on the heels of the invention of the telephone by Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison applied for patents for the world's first effective phonograph. In his application he called the instrument a 'speaking machine' but as *Harper's Weekly* pointed out it could 'talk, sing, whistle, cough, sneeze, or perform any other accoustical feat'. It appeared to be a marvellously 'impartial' device, reproducing without preference anything from lyrical music to coarse street language, and its manners — for a machine — were impeccable; it never spoke unless it had first been spoken to.

There was much speculation about its potential impact on the quality of life. Some feared that it would make the skills and pleasures of reading and letter-writing obsolete. Others, including the editor of *Scientific American*, extolled its virtues: 'Imagine an opera or oratorio, sung by the greatest living vocalists, thus recorded, and capable of being repeated as we desire.' This concept was, in those days, nothing short of amazing.

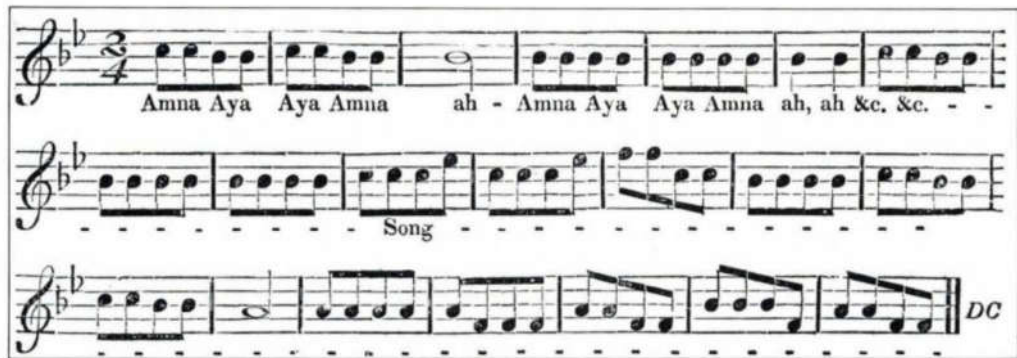
In its direct transmission of voice the telephone had seemed miraculous enough, but the phonograph added the dimension of time. In effect it was able to intercept sound waves travelling at a thousand feet per second, store them for an indefinite period and broadcast them later. It was a vocal time machine, capable of transporting twentieth-century listeners into a nineteenth-century world of music. It promised immortality or eternal youth to voice, preserving its youthful characteristics throughout the life of an individual and even after death.

Cylinder-type phonographs (and 'graphophones') were improved in the next few decades through the efforts of Edison, his colleagues and his rivals. The machines quickly found a number of useful applications in business and entertainment. Equipped with hearing tubes, mounted on tables, and driven by foot treadles, they invaded offices as the first dictaphones. Placed within cabinets in bars and restaurants, powered by batteries and operated by coins, they became the first jukeboxes. Powered by hand springs and accompanied by the large horns soon to become, with the dog Nipper, the trade mark of the Victor Talking Machine Company, they entered the home. People could then buy either pre-recorded or blank cylinders, just as today we can purchase cassette tapes either with or without sound tracks.

Although the inventors of the phonograph and its variants may not have foreseen it, the machines offered exciting new possibilities in anthropological research. Relatively small, portable and inexpensive, they were driven by hand-wound springs, and could be used in remote regions to record the language and music of primitive peoples. It was not until about 1900, however, that they were used among the Eskimo.

Before the advent of the phonograph some explorers and scientists had recorded Eskimo songs and speech by the oral, or direct-dictation, method. They listened to an informant and attempted to write down a phonetic approximation of the sounds. This was relatively easy with individual words, more difficult with sentences, and very difficult with songs, for which melodies had to be transcribed as well. Unless they possessed unusual linguistic and musical skills they could not attain greater accuracy in transcription of either words or music, and could not produce reliable translations of text. Seldom aware of the technical characteristics of the native language and music, they often perceived them as primitive and formless, and they sometimes described them in superficial and amusing terms. In 1818 John Ross described a song sung by Eskimos of Smith Sound,

After a few minutes the performer began to sing 'Amnah ajah', and in a very short time the second performer, who had been looking at the other in silence, began, as if inspired, to distort his face, and imitate the indelicate attitudes of the first, and soon after to sing as chorus, 'Hejaw, hejaw'. After this



had continued with increasing energy for ten minutes, the tune was suddenly changed to a shrill note, in which the words 'Weehee, weehee' were uttered with great rapidity.

Among the same people a third of a century later Elisha Kane heard what he thought was the 'same rude monotonous song' and in 1900, when Robert Stein heard a song with a 'ya ya' refrain such as Ross had described eighty years earlier, he concluded that the tribe had only one song. This conclusion was wrong, as he soon came to realize, but the episode illustrates the pitfalls of trying to analyse Eskimo music from a few historical accounts and crude musical notations. If Stein had been able to listen to records made by Ross and Kane the similarities and differences in the songs might easily have been identified.

Lacking a recording device, early observers tended to comment on the most obvious characteristics of the songs, such as the monotony of the music and the 'ya ya' refrain, while less striking but more important aspects went unnoticed. At Winter Island Parry heard the 'well-known Greenland chorus, "Amna aya" . . . a hum-drum chorus . . . well calculated to set the children to sleep.' In northwestern Greenland Stein was honoured with a long performance which 'might have continued indefinitely if something (I think it was the call to dinner) had not stopped it'.

If explorers were occasionally contemptuous of the apparently senseless repetitions of 'ayah' and 'ya ya', one can only wonder what the Eskimos thought of Euro-American music. Parry, to his credit, admitted that the words of 'Chevy Chace' (a popular English song of the period) were just as 'interminable' as those of the Eskimo song he described. Stein was interested to hear the Polar Eskimos humming 'Ta-ra-ra boom dee-ay' a song they must have learned from the crews of whalers or exploring vessels, and unquestionably one whose lyrics would rival any of the 'ya ya' songs in monotony and meaninglessness.

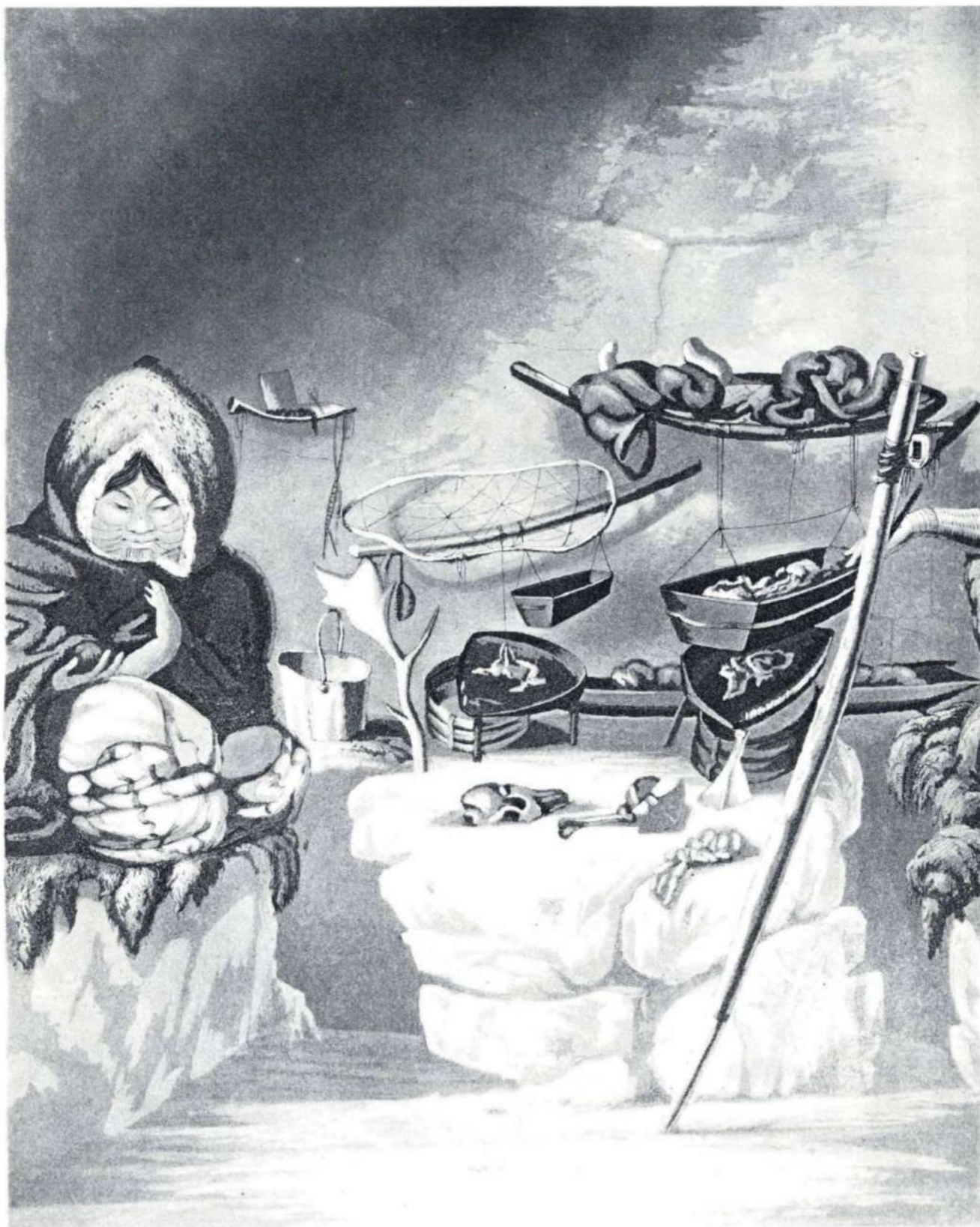
Not all visitors to the arctic regions had the inclination or opportunity to transcribe Eskimo music. Parry

may have been the first. During his second expedition in search of the Northwest Passage (1821-23) he wrote down at least two songs sung by Eskimos who visited the ships at Winter Island. He stated with confidence, 'I can only promise that the notes are correctly given, and that I have done my best to put them into the time in which they are sung.' But the difficulties of transcribing songs from an unfamiliar musical tradition with alien patterns of form and rhythm, using European symbols of music notation, must have been exceedingly difficult. As for the song texts, Parry was less confident. 'On the words of their songs in general, I cannot, from my imperfect knowledge of their language pretend to speak very accurately.'

Although a few other nineteenth-century explorers made valiant efforts to write down Eskimo songs, most lacked the opportunity to meet natives, the time to record music, and the linguistic and musical skills essential for the job. Explorers, nonetheless, succeeded in opening a small window into this important aspect of Eskimo culture.

Field anthropologists were more likely to have the inclination, time and training needed for a meaningful study of Eskimo music. Franz Boas, in this as in so many other scientific activities, was somewhat of a pioneer. During his immersion in Eskimo life in Cumberland Sound in 1883-84, he made the first extensive collection of Eskimo songs. His main interest lay in the song texts. At first he considered his own fluency in Inuktitut unequal to the task of translation, and enlisted the help of the Dane, Henry Rink, who had spent many years in Greenland. But as he gained confidence in the language (one of a dozen North American languages in which Boas became proficient) Boas undertook the challenging task of translating songs into German and English himself.

Even with someone as eager, as determined, and as talented as Franz Boas, the difficulties of the oral or direct-dictation method during the pre-phonograph era were great, especially in the Arctic, where winter darkness and cold imposed severe practical problems. The Danish anthropologist William Thalbitzer wrote vividly about such problems:



*At Winter Island Parry heard and recorded the 'well-known Greenland chorus,
"Amna aya" a hum-drum chorus . . . well calculated to set the children to sleep.'
'Interior of an Eskimaux Snow-Hut, Winter Island, 1822'. Drawn by Captain G. F. Lyon. From Parry's 'Journal.'*

Most of these notes and records I took down on my sledge-journeys, in the huts of the natives, sitting on the edge of the stump-bed, with no other desk but my knee to rest the paper on. The dim daylight from the window and the flame of the train-oil lamp in the hut made it just possible for the pen to find its way over the paper. At that time I could give no attention to the contents and connection of what I was hearing since I had to concentrate it all on the phonetical side of the words so that I could get an accurate reproduction of them; most of the words I repeated to myself as I wrote them down. I refrained as much as possible from stopping the narrator or the singer in order to have him repeat a word, but I often let him repeat the whole so that I could revise my record. When I noted down melodies to the songs, I used my violin, which was tuned after the tuning fork that I always carried with me.

Robert Stein, a United States Geological Survey clerk who undertook private expeditions to Greenland and Ellesmere Island in 1897 and 1899-1901, required many repetitions when writing down songs. 'I would note down the first phrase', he wrote, 'and ask them to sing again. They would start from the beginning, and when they had finished the next phrase I would stop them and write down four or six additional notes.' Using this laborious method in Smith Sound he managed to collect thirty-eight songs in two years.

The introduction of the phonograph brought about a revolution in the field recording of Eskimo music. It provided the means of preserving traditional songs and drum dances before they were erased from memory by the powerful influence of European music introduced by whalers, sailors, missionaries and traders. The phonograph made it possible for anyone — even someone who spoke no Inuktitut and could not carry a tune — to record a song in a relatively short period of time, exactly as the words were sung without the necessity for tiresome and inconsistent repetitions. The material could later be transcribed, translated and analysed, by experts, in the comfort of an office or laboratory with the machine (rather than the singer) providing identical repetitions. 'That modern invention, the phonograph, first brought us ideal help,' wrote Thalbitzer.

After recording certain songs by both direct dictation and phonograph, sometimes using the same singer, Thalbitzer concluded that the results obtained in the two methods were in 'sharp contrast' to each other. The differences were so significant that he became sceptical of many of the transcriptions made during the pre-phonograph era.

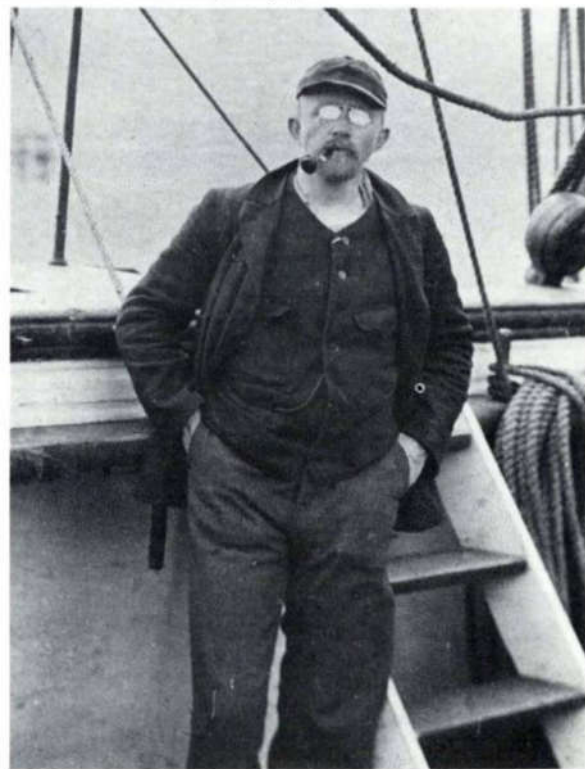
Marvellous as it was, the phonograph of the early twentieth century was not perfect and many criticized it at first. The speed of recording was not always con-

stant. Words sometimes sounded slurred. The sound from the wax cylinders was affected by temperature and humidity. And aside from these purely technical shortcomings, the phonograph was 'a machine without soul or heart'. Something valuable was lost in merely listening to sounds issuing from the horn, far away in space and time from the ambiance of the event and the personality of the performer.

More than two decades passed between Edison's invention of the phonograph and its first use in the study of primitive music. In 1889 Dr Walter Fewkes used a wax-cylinder phonograph to record the songs and tales of the Passamaquoddy Indians of north-eastern Maine. The project was in a sense an experiment. Fewkes wanted to use the machine among the Zuni Indians of New Mexico if it proved effective in the trials. It did prove effective, and Fewkes went on to collect phonograms of Zuni material, which were later analysed at Harvard University.

The paper in which Fewkes reported his successful first use of the phonograph was published in the journal of the American Folk-Lore Society in 1890. It is interesting that this society had been founded two years before by Franz Boas, who was still a member of the editorial board. Not long after his pioneer work with the Baffin Island Eskimos Boas had resigned his position at Berlin University to take up American citizenship. He was now docent at Clark University,

Christian Kruuse, probably the first man to record the songs of the Greenland Eskimos on a phonograph.



Arktisk Institut, Charlottenlund, Denmark



Traditional dances are still performed by the Delta Drum Dancers at northern festivities.



Danish anthropologist William Thalbitzer who made an outstanding contribution to Eskimo musicology.

soon to become the first American university to grant a doctoral degree in the subject of anthropology.

Boas must have applauded the pioneer work of Fewkes. Possibly he regretted that he had not possessed a phonograph during his own arctic field work. Certainly he realized that the phonograph had an important role to play among northern peoples, whose music was still little known. Ten years later his efforts would contribute to the first sound recording among the Eskimo.

In 1895 Boas joined the American Museum of Natural History as assistant curator of anthropology. One of the principal thrusts of his valuable work in this institution during the next decade was direction of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, which was designed to shed light on the fascinating question of the origin of New World aboriginal peoples. Had they developed 'in situ', independent of Old World stocks? Or, as cultural similarities seemed to suggest, had they migrated from Asia to the Americas through the equatorial regions of the Pacific or across Bering Strait? The Jesup Expedition was to focus on the latter region. In effect it was not one but many separate expeditions over a period of several years, to areas between the state of Washington and the mouth of the Amur River in Asia. International to an uncommon degree, it

'A whaling captain may seem an unlikely person to record native music but George Comer was the ideal man.'



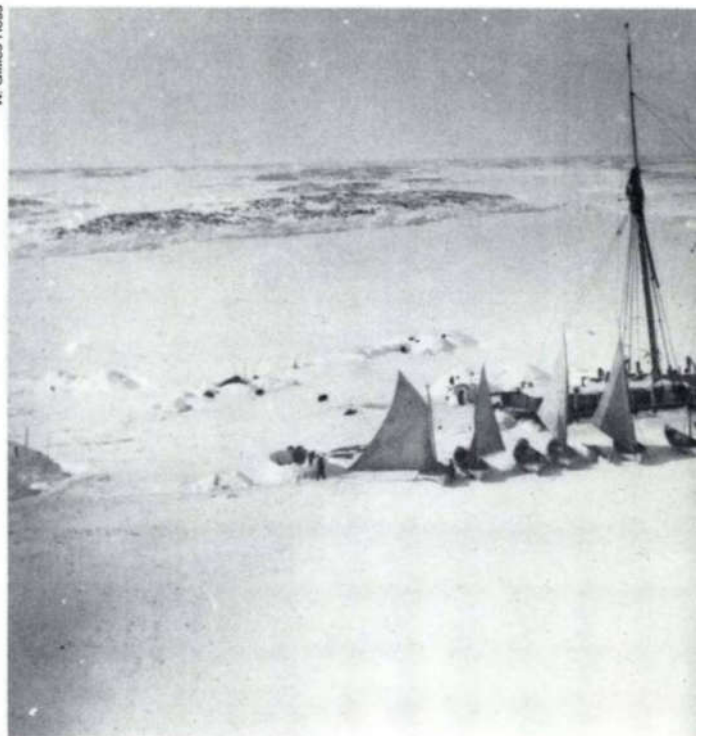
The Edison Standard phonograph (minus its horn) and the camera that Captain Comer used in Hudson Bay. Courtesy of George Comer, grandson of the whaling captain, who lives in his grandfather's home in East Haddam, Connecticut.

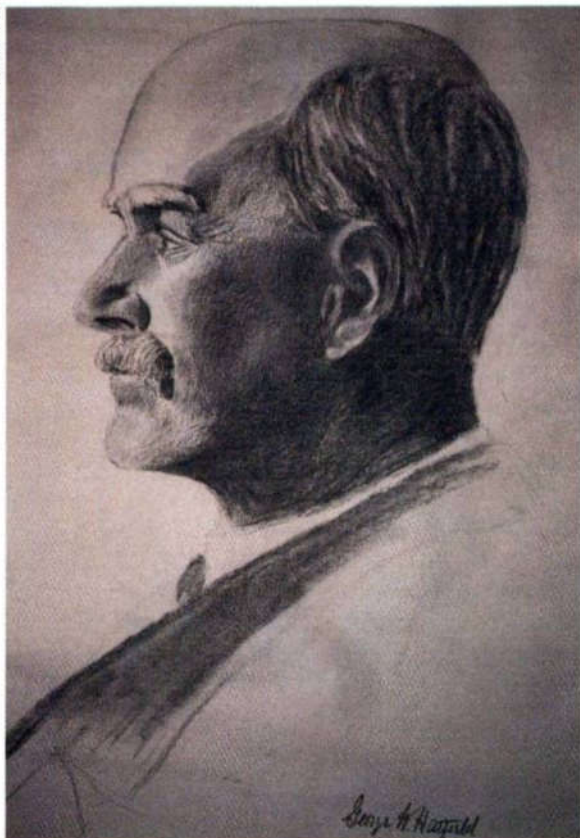
involved scientists from the United States, Canada, Germany and Russia.

The study of music and language among the various native peoples on the Asiatic and American sides of the Bering Sea was an important component of the ethnographic investigations of the Jesup Expedition. Between 1900 and 1902 two Russian anthropologists, Waldemar Bogoras and Waldemar Jochelson, obtained at least 120 phonograph cylinders of songs of the Chukchis, Eskimos, Koryaks, Tungus, Yakuts and Yukaghirs. The small Eskimo collection — not more than a dozen cylinders — was made by Bogoras at Indian Point on the Russian side of Bering Strait, probably in May and June 1901. This appears to have been the first sound recording made among any Eskimo people.

Independently, Danish scientists introduced the phonograph for musical and linguistic research among Greenland Eskimos. The first records to appear were made during the winter of 1901-02 on the east coast, near Angmassalik, and strangely enough they were made by a botanist. Christian Kruuse was engaged in studies 'partly floristic, partly ecological', and was instructed to 'investigate meteorological, biological, zoological and geological phenomena too', if time permitted. As these instructions did not mention

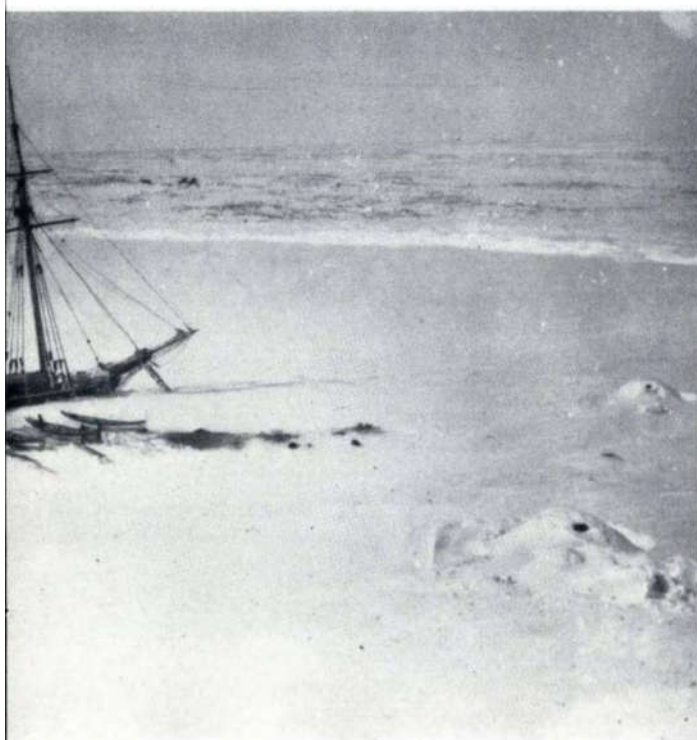
W. Gillies Ross





Sketch of Captain Comer by George Hatfield. From the collection of George Comer of East Haddam.

Public Archives of Canada PA 38270



The 'Era' in winter ice at Fullerton Harbour, May 1904, with her boats out for outfitting for spring floe-edge whaling. Photographed by the A. P. Low Expedition.

ethnographic work it seems likely that Kruuse took a phonograph north in order to relieve the monotony of the winter months when field work would have to be curtailed. The entertainment value of the phonograph in the camp was great, not only for Kruuse but also for Greenland Eskimos, who came from miles around to hear the waltzes and other European musical treats broadcast by the talking machine's large horn. Kruuse took advantage of the presence of Greenlanders to record at least six songs and five magic spells on blank cylinders.

Despite the fact that northern exploration and scientific field work have been carried out almost exclusively by males until quite recently, these three pioneers of sound recording among arctic and sub-arctic peoples — Kruuse in Greenland and Bogoras and Jochelson in Siberia — were all accompanied by their wives. Mrs Kruuse wintered with her husband in a camp near Angmassalik in 1901-02. Mrs Bogoras spent the winter of 1900-01 at Marinsky post at the mouth of the Anadyr River, while her husband travelled almost continuously. Mrs Jochelson went everywhere with her husband, passing the winter of 1900-01 among several small villages near the northern coast of the Sea of Okhotsk, and a second winter travelling by horse, foot, raft and boat, nearly 8,000 miles to the Kolyma River valley, down almost to the Arctic coast, westward to Verkhoyansk, and finally southward to Irkutsk, from which they travelled by train to European Russia and then continued to New York.

Nothing is known of the field activities of Mrs Kruuse. Mrs Bogoras kept busy during her husband's extensive trips by collecting ethnographic specimens for the American Museum of Natural History. Mrs Jochelson, a medical student at the University of Zurich at the time, pitched right into the work, carrying out medical projects, photography, and anthropometric research. The presence of these hardy women, and possibly their direct participation, may have contributed in an important way to the ethnomusicological work normally attributed solely to their husbands.

By the year 1903, therefore, several phonorecordings of Eskimo music had been made in east Siberia and east Greenland, but nothing in between these two extremities of the Eskimo domain. The native music of the arctic regions of Canada and Alaska was known to the outside world only through the few notations made by explorers and scientists using the oral method. The *sound* of this music had to be imagined rather than heard. The first collection of sound recordings from arctic North America was obtained over a period of several years beginning in 1903, by the Quebec-born, Connecticut-raised whaling master George Comer.

A whaling captain may seem an unlikely person to

undertake the recording of native music but in fact George Comer was the ideal man for the job. He had been sailing into Hudson Bay since 1893. He normally remained for two winters and once the ship was frozen into harbour ice in October he had plenty of idle time on his hands. He was on excellent terms with the 300-odd Aivilingmiut and Qaernermiut, from whose ranks he hired 'ship's natives' to help with summer whaling and winter hunting. Comer was an admirer of Eskimo culture, spoke the language, and loved to trade stories with the people in his cabin on the schooner *Era*. He had already established a solid reputation as a careful and thorough observer of Eskimo life and a reliable collector of artifacts and natural history specimens for museums. Making recordings of their songs, dances and stories, was merely an extension of the ethnographical work he had been carrying out among them for a decade.

Comer's scientific work was supported by Franz Boas, who had been using Comer as a field collector for the American Museum of Natural History for several years. It seems likely that the success of the phonograph on the Jesup North Pacific Expedition encouraged Boas to extend sound recording into Hudson Bay, where it could be carried out effectively and inexpensively during routine whaling voyages. When Comer prepared to depart from New Bedford, Massachusetts, in June 1903 he recorded in his journal, 'I have also a graphophone to take north with fifty blanks and about forty records. These I believe will be quite a surprise to the Eskimo.' Indeed it is easy to believe that the machine was a surprise to people who had never before heard recorded music, and who were to be bombarded during the next two winters by unfamiliar tunes such as 'Stop yer ticklin Jock', 'Home sweet home', 'Song in the valley where the bluebirds sing', 'We'll be sweethearts to the end', 'When Tommy Atkins marries Dolly Gray' and (most appropriately) 'Mister Captain, stop the ship'. Most surprising of all, perhaps, was to hear their own songs in their own voices, played back to them by the phonograph.

Comer initiated the sound recording on 7 November 1903 and continued to build up the collection during the next two winters. It is clear from his journal entries that his method was to exchange songs and stories with the people rather than to subject them to interrogation. In addition to playing them music he told them Bible stories and gave them bits of history and archaeology — the American Civil War; the Indian Mound Builders, and so on. Translating Knud Rasmussen's book *The People of the Polar North* from English into Inuktitut he recounted tales and traditions of the Greenland Eskimos, in which his Hudson Bay Eskimos quickly perceived similarities with their own culture. Comer was as much teacher as researcher, opening their eyes to Euro-American events and concepts and to char-

acteristics of Eskimo life in other parts of the Arctic at the same time as he was performing the valuable service of recording — and thereby preserving — their oral tradition. Comer's readiness to teach as well as learn, to give information as well as take it, won him the firm friendship and co-operation of the Aivilingmiut, Qaernermiut, and other groups in northwestern Hudson Bay, and thereby contributed to the accuracy and completeness of his ethnographic work.

The results of the 1903-05 voyage encouraged the American Museum of Natural History to send a phonograph and twice as many blanks with Comer when he departed again for Hudson Bay in 1907, and it commissioned him again in 1910-12. In these three whaling cruises he recorded sixty-four wax cylinders representing seven tribes in Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait.

After the efforts of Comer, Bogoras and Kruuse first brought the sound of Eskimo music to the outside world in the first decade of this century, others built upon their work, collecting phonograms in various parts of the Eskimo domain. Willima Thalbitzer, Christian Leden, Diamond Jenness, Paul-Emil Victor, Eric Holtved and Jean Gabus increased the store of recorded Eskimo songs and drum dances to more than 600 items by World War II. But the sound of Eskimo music was familiar only to the specialists who collected and analysed the recordings. Wax cylinders were difficult to copy and no commercial records of Eskimo music were produced. And regrettably some of the collections, including those of Comer, were not even subjected to musical analysis, but merely gathered dust in museum storerooms, deteriorating through the years, their existence virtually unknown.

The pioneer era of sound recording among the Eskimo peoples was therefore based largely on phonographs and graphophones using wax cylinders, and was characterized by ethnomusicological research rather than general listening.

By World War II the wax-cylinder machines were on their way out. In home listening and entertainment they had been replaced much earlier by disc records pressed from moulds, and now field scientists were turning to wire and tape recorders, which gave better results. The modern era of Eskimo recording could be said to have begun after the war, when Folkways Records issued its long-play album 'The Eskimos of Hudson Bay and Alaska' containing songs recorded during the 1940s by Laura Boulton with 'good modern equipment' (as the album notes pointed out).

Since that time many records of Eskimo music have become available to the general public (including the Inuit themselves). The enthusiastic listener can now hear not only traditional music of the Eskimo but also contemporary music which reflects the cultural changes that have occurred in recent decades. ♦

'Like Words of Fire'

Lore of the Woodland Cree from the Journals of P. G. Downes

Edited and Introduced by R. H. Cockburn
Woodcut Illustrations by Annie Downes



'Nimosom Atchimo' ('Grandfather, tell me a story').

Robert Cockburn teaches English at the University of New Brunswick. His editions of P. G. Downes's journals have appeared in *'The Beaver'* (Spring 1983), *'Arctic'*, and *'Fram: The Journal of Polar Studies'*. He is also preparing for publication the journal kept by Ernest C. Oberholtzer on his exploration of Nuelin Lake and the Thlewiaza River in 1912.

Annie Downes, of Chicago, is a professional artist, and the daughter of P. G. Downes. She has produced a number of woodcut relief prints illustrating the stories of the Northern Cree recorded by her father.

Photographs are by P. G. Downes, and are reproduced by permission of Mrs E. G. Downes.

IN LATE AUGUST 1936, between Pelican Narrows and Frog Portage, en route by canoe for Reindeer Lake, Prentice Downes and his Cree partner, Solomon Merasty, encountered 'an old medicine man', Adam Ballantyne, and a boy. The four travellers shared lunch. As they parted, Downes's eye was drawn to 'a beautiful thing, the paddling of the old man sitting down in the bottom of the canoe — flawless and lineless.' In the weeks that followed — many days of which were spent windbound on Reindeer — Solomon regaled Downes with stories, myths, and information about his own people, and especially with details about the dream-

life and the spiritual world of the Woodland Cree. These exchanges gave impetus to Downes's interest in such matters, but Solomon's knowledge could not begin to compare with that of Adam, whom Downes met again the following summer at Pelican Narrows.

An extract from his journal dated 23 July 1937 reads:

'I chatted with Roderick Mackenzie, a half-breed prospector; originally from Cumberland House, he is a most intelligent young man and an interpreter *par excellence*. He managed to get old Adam Ballantyne going for me on some of the local history. The true name of Pelican Narrows is *Wapa-wikoosehikum* — Narrows of Fear. According to Adam, years ago [in the eighteenth century] there were sixty tents pitched here, thirty on the flat by the shore and thirty on the hill. The men left to take their furs to the eastward to trade, presumably to one of the Hudson's Bay Company posts on the Bay, and the camp was attacked by Blackfeet and completely wiped out but for two children who were left out on a little reef not far from the point. When the men returned, they found the bodies floating along the shore. They pursued the raiders and overtook them far down toward Deschambault Lake, killing all of them but the leader, whom they held for council; and then — Adam was most dramatic, acting

this out in pantomime — they seized him by the hair and cut off his head. . . . I asked Adam about the red ochre figures [pictographs] upon the rock at Medicine Rapids, and he told me that long ago, before there was any church or Christ, a man had gone there to gain his *puagan* and had stayed for three months without food or drink until he had gained a great dream power, and that the figures represented what he had dreamed about. . . . He says he has many things to tell me. He is very old indeed, though exactly what his age may be I am not sure. From all that I can gather, he seems to be somewhere in his seventies.'

So began P. G. Downes's friendship with a man whose indigenous beliefs and personality he came to cherish. It had been the reminiscences of another aged man, William Brooks Cabot, that had much to do with first arousing Downes's interest in Indian cultures, for Cabot (of Boston) had lived with Naskapis during his extensive travels in the Labrador interior in the early years of the century. By the time Downes ventured to northern Saskatchewan in 1936, he had two ethnological forays to the Quebec North Shore behind him. But he never returned to the Côte Nord, for he developed an enduring affinity with the Peter Ballantyne band of Pelican Narrows, to whom he was to pay an affectionate and perceptive tribute in his book, *Sleeping Island* (1943). The book, however, contains only highlights of what Downes learned about the Crees of Pelican and elsewhere. It was in his journals that he recorded scrupulously all that he heard and gathered, and it is mainly from those journals that this selective account is drawn.

Through his interpreters — for he did not fully trust his own understanding of the Cree tongue — Downes made it known to Adam Ballantyne, as he did to others, that he had come a great distance in order 'to learn the things of long ago, because I knew that they were being fast forgotten and thought that they should be written down before they had all disappeared and no person would any longer be able to remember them or how his forefathers lived.' Adam, who had never accepted the white man's treaty or his religion, occupied 'a curious position in the band. Though the younger people were inclined to ridicule his ancient beliefs, still, when anyone was really ill, when all the white man's nostrums, painkillers, and pills were of no avail, they would turn to the old medicine man. . . . He is a very exact narrator and is extremely careful to correct errors. His stories were repeated after they had been given to me in summary, and several times he corrected ideas or misinterpretations. He made a sharp distinction between what was fact and what was considered as fancy. . . . Crouched with his toes tucked up under him, he would gesticulate and sometimes become very excited, sweating profusely and rocking back and forth with emotional recollection.'



P. G. Downes, 1947.



Norman Lathlin, 1937.

'Things were very different long ago, before religion,' the pagan raconteur told Downes. 'For then there was no sin, then there was no *fear*, and people were happy; happy like the animals, and a man was satisfied. Then a man had more than one wife, sometimes more than four, but usually three. Very rarely a man had but one. And he treated them all fairly and no one complained. It was all natural, just as the animals do, with no sin. And no one thought but to obey the things our fathers and their fathers had taught them. I think that it was better then. For there was no fear, no treaty, and no debt. Long ago, Peter Ballantyne, my grandfather, who was the first chief of this band, told me many of these things which I tell you so that they may not be forgotten. I have two sons, and when I tell them, they laugh. But Peter told me these things, which I learned before I was twenty-five. And many of these things I know to be true, for I have done them and seen them. . . . These matters and the old days are clearer to me than today. I can see them like words of fire in my head; I can see the very things that I am telling you about. I have much to tell you, for you do not laugh at these things which Peter told me and his father told him.'

Adam was Downes's main source, but he learned much also from other Crees during his summers in the Pas-Pelican-Lac la Ronge country from 1936 to 1947. Long sessions were spent with Abraham and John Ballantyne (Deschambault Lake band), Nehemiah Charles (Stanley), and John Harris and Norman Lathlin (The Pas Reserve). All of these men were nominal Christians and all were over sixty when interviewed; Lathlin, the oldest after Harris, was 85 in 1939. So moved was he by Downes's almost empathetic appreciation of the traditionary beliefs of the Cree that he designated himself the Harvard man's spiritual 'grandfather'. His first response to Downes's curiosity is as poignant to read

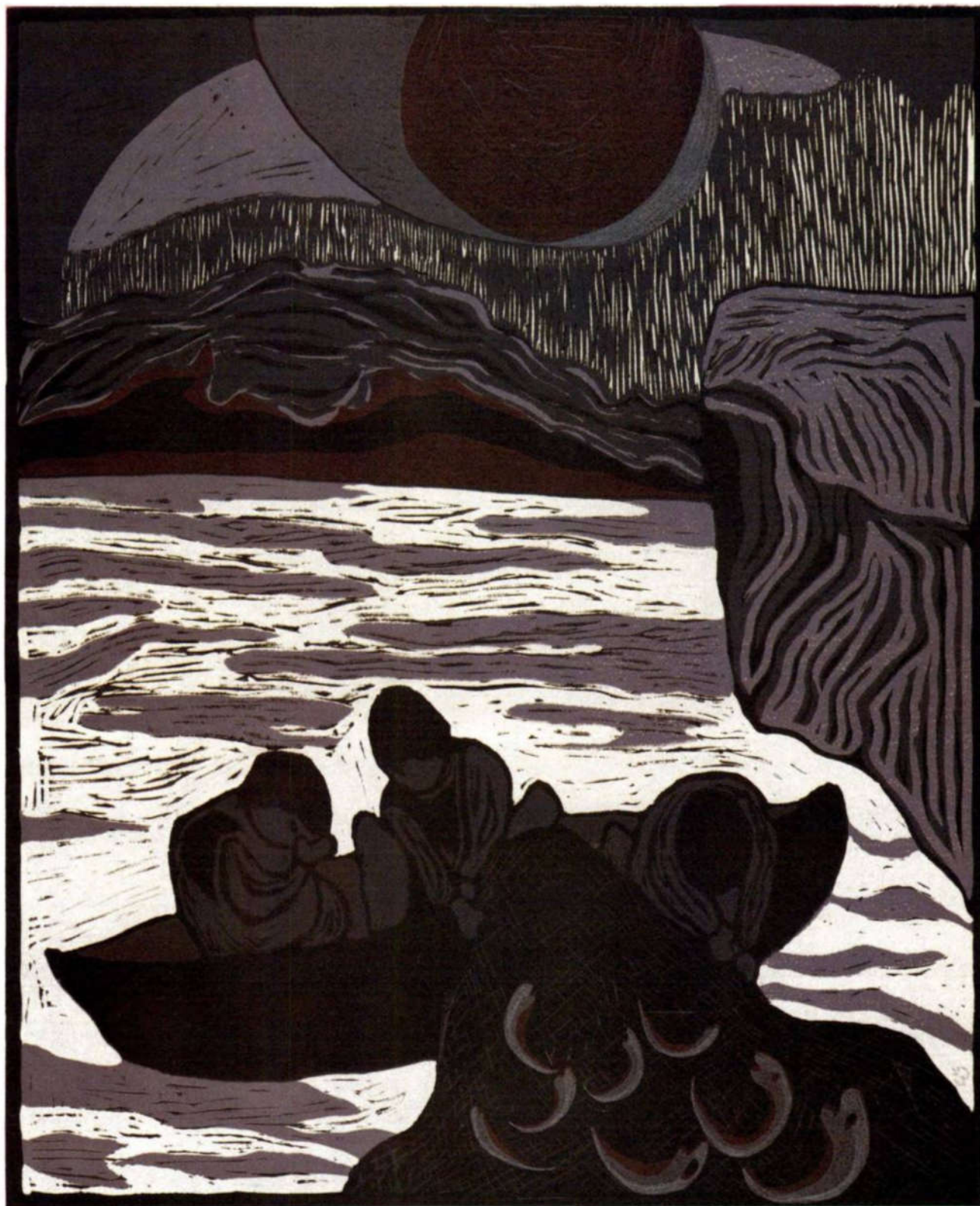


Pelican Narrows, Saskatchewan, 1936.

now as it was to hear then: 'Wah! wah! tsk! tsk! You have travelled a long way — my, my. But I am telling you only true things, things I have seen or heard myself. These are not lies. For when I was young, before treaty was paid, Indians could be trusted.' Equally moving was Nehemiah Charles's prelude to his recollections in 1947: 'I am telling you these things about a long time ago which I learned from my father, who was the first chief of this band and a very old man, about 90, when he died. He told me these things. You understand, these things are from before people learned to pray.'

One other source of lore, one final figure, runs through Downes's writings. This was Andrew Flett, whom Downes met at Denare Beach, Amisk Lake in 1939. 'He is very ancient. His father [James] was for many years factor at Fort McPherson; he married a Loucheaux woman & Andrew was one of the offspring. His brother [John] was a canoeman for [J. B.] Tyrrell on the Dubawnt [in 1893]. Andrew himself has seen a good part of the world, having been in the Yukon Rush, the Boer War, and over the north. He helped establish Fort Hall & was in on Ennadai [Lake].'* After filling several pages with Flett's meticulous accounts of Indian myths, legends, and practices, Downes wrote this: 'Andrew is a remarkable ancient. Independent, honourable, and humble, he is a fine old man. He has beautiful diction, almost poetic. He is very neat & clean. Now he acts as guardian of the beach, putting out fires of picnickers and picking up about the place.'

* Andrew's name appeared several times in *The Beaver* during the 1920s, when he was still a valued Company servant at Brochet. It was there, in 1912, that he 'told some good stories about wolves and deer' to Ernest Oberholtzer the evening before Oberholtzer embarked on his exploration of Nueltin Lake and the Thlewiaza River.



'About the Mimigwesseos'.

Puagan

To the Cree mind, all the world was spirit-bearing and animistic — every tree, every animal, every insect, and even the rocks and sand and water. His life was spent in placating and observing a host of spirits. He and the world about him were a completely dual world of the physical and its spiritual counterpart. To help him in his struggle in this world of spirits, each individual possessed a very secret, personal guiding and helping spirit which he could call upon in time of stress, which often visited him in dreams, which was his and his alone. It might be the spirit-half of anything — a certain animal, a sunbeam, the rainbow, a grain of sand, an unknown human, in fact anything in the world. This was a man's 'puagan'. On the strength of a man's puagan rested his success in the physical world about him and his survival against the evil which the spirits of enemies might direct against him. — Prentice Downes in 'Sleeping Island'

Adam Ballantyne: When a boy reached manhood, he and the others like him went out to get their puagan. They would all gather in a great lodge and at three corners of it would be three old men with their drums. The young men were all in a circle. The older men would then begin to drum; 'itigo . . . itigo . . . itigo' and then to sing, and all the time the drums were going; 'itigo, itigo . . . itigo.' This would go on for a long time, and then each of the young men would go out, one at a time, until they were all gone. Some would build their nest in a cleft between steep rocks, others would build a nest in a tall spruce tree, and there they would stay for three months without food or drink. And yet none ever died; but many would go crazy and come back *weetigos*. And there they would dream, and dream, until they dreamed all manner of things. Every kind of thing in the world would be dreamed of. And at last there would be one thing which they dreamed that would speak to them. And that thing, that would be their puagan. Sometimes more than one thing might speak to them, but there was always one main puagan. The north wind, Keewaytin, was the strongest puagan of all; the bear was next in strength. A man could talk to animals of his puagan, but not out loud, just by dreams or in his head. Girls sought their puagan at that time when they first became women. Through dreams, the puagan would tell a man what to do. A man would always obey his puagan. If he wished to kill the animal which was his puagan, the animal through its puagan would tell the man if it wished to be killed or not. He would not kill that animal unless it wished to be killed and told him so.

Andrew Flett, as summarized by Downes: 'According to Andrew, the novitiate spoke to every living thing in hope of a reply. He worked on the principle of 7 things speaking back to him. He would stay out possibly a



Adam Ballantyne, 1947.



*Camp at the Stanley mission on the Churchill River, 1947.
The Anglican church was built in the 1850s.*

whole summer. He would not go beyond 7, for the burden was too much to bear. The burden of puagan, Andrew says, was great. Particularly was this true when a person got baptised. He has seen such old men, baptised late in life, who would strike at their foreheads & make motions as if to pluck out the dominant puagan.'

John Ballantyne: My puagan is a skeleton. The puagan is like a man's going after a woman, it gets weaker and weaker as one gets very old. Sometimes a man who had left to get his puagan would come back a *weetigo* because his dream had brought him the puagan of ice. He would go crazy, and if this happened, if he had this ice-puagan, he would become a *weetigo* and not leave the village until he had eaten everyone in it, unless he was defeated by a stronger puagan.

Soloman Merasty: I have a strange puagan. It is an old man with a high black hat and moccasins of glass. Sometimes before a big dance, if I dream of him then, no matter how good the other dancers, no one can beat me at dancing if he has put his feet with those glass moccasins on me. I will try and tell you what the puagan is, but I can not do this very well, for there are words about it in our language which you do not have in yours. But here is something. If you have a puagan, if you have dreamed enough of it and it has come to you, whatever it may be, this thing, then sometime when you are in a tough spot — say that you were caught in a squall on a lake — then, if you called to this puagan with your mind it would come, and if your power was strong enough it would save you.

John Harris: In the old days a man with a powerful puagan would put a stick outside his lodge, and when anyone came near, the stick would cry out. So, too, I have seen many years ago a medicine man at Moose Lake who made a plover out of grass and set it up before his lodge when he left so that no one could dare to go near the lodge lest it cry out.

Adam Ballantyne: Many times long ago men would contest their puagan power against one another. Many men even died in this. For instance, if several got together to show how strong their power was, they would hand about a short poison arrow which they would thrust into here [indicating the chest just under the right armpit] and take it out again and pass it to the next one. Sometimes a very powerful man might pull it out the other side, but only a few could do so. Often men died, and in many different ways, from contests in which their puagan was not strong enough for the testing. When one man defied another, he had to prove his claim or die, because the other man's puagan would otherwise overcome him. Sometimes it would happen that a woman would have a sunbeam as a puagan, and if that was so, she could do a very fine thing. When the sunbeam came through a little hole in the lodge and made it like here [a ray of sunlight came through a crack in the logs and extended to the floor as a slanting bar of light], she could take pieces of babiche and hang them right on the sunbeam.

The Shaking Lodge

Adam Ballantyne: Another thing that the man with a particularly strong puagan might do was the shaking of the tent. They would build a tipi of logs, four fingers apart, and cover it with moose skins. The man would crouch outside with the moose skin over him and soon he would be inside. Then he would begin to drum and to chant, and he would call for the puagan of his enemy, and at last the tipi would begin to shake and rock though it was made of firm logs. It would do so more and more.

And if his own puagan was not the stronger, he would not leave the tipi alive.

Abraham Ballantyne: A tipi was built of stout logs. They were driven into the ground four fingers apart; there was no door. Then the person who was to fight with his enemy kneeled on one knee against the wall of the tipi with a moose hide over his shoulders. Then he began to flatten himself against the side of the tipi, against the logs. Soon he would disappear inside and the moose hide would then become wrapped about the tipi. Then, after singing, he would call to the north, then he would drum and sing more and would call to the south, then to the east and the west; he would call in every direction for his enemy to come. Before long, the puagan of his enemy would come. It would come down through the top, and they would begin to wrestle. First the tipi would just begin to tremble a little. Then it would begin to shake. Then it would rattle, and shake more and more, and more, until it was swaying and almost seemed to be waving back and forth. And if the man won, his enemy's puagan could not leave. But if the man were defeated by his enemy, he was trapped and his puagan could not leave, and thus he would be dead.

Norman Lathlin: This was what sometimes happened. A tipi was built of strong logs driven into the earth close together in a circle and tied around with young birches to make it very firm. Now the medicine man was taken across the river, and there he was all tied up like this [crouching], so that even his head could not move. Then everyone left him and hastened back across the river, but each time he would be ahead of them, right inside the tipi, singing and drumming and calling out in every direction to those that he knew at a great distance. (Though first I should have mentioned that they would see him throwing up through the opening at the top of the tipi the thongs with which they had tied him.) Soon, rattles and bells would begin to jingle at the top of the tipi and the voices of those he had called would begin to answer him, telling him the news and many things that he wished to know. This is called the *coosapatchigan*, the conjuring tent.

The Weetigo

Nehemiah Charles: Weetigos were cannibals. They were regular people who got that way. They came around mostly in the winter and up to the early spring. The weetigo's hair stood on end and all the flesh was eaten away from his lips and mouth. Some very powerful men could shoot the weetigo with arrows. If this was done, the arrow went right through him and out his back. He could be shot with a gun, but one would have to take a knife and make a cut like this  on the end of the bullet. A very powerful man could wrestle the weetigo; the creature was then all burned up.



'Wisakyjak Dancing'.

Solomon Merasty: This friend of mine, he was going off in another direction from me to hunt. Some time later he rushed back to our camp, and he looked very bad. He had seen a weetigo. He said that he had been going along, when he began to hear a noise like a big wind, though he could not see any trees bending on the ridges. This noise became louder and he became very frightened. Then he saw a man, all naked, running, and he was with this noise. He was a terrible-looking man. His top lip was all gone and he had a kind of cloth hanging down from his mouth, covering his chin. He had long teeth and his face was as if it was burnt. He had terrible eyes. My friend hid until this weetigo had gone away past, and then he ran back to camp. This was late in the winter. We moved our camp and left this part of the country.

Andrew Flett, as summarized by Downes: 'In discussing the weetigo matter, he had a rational and unusual account. According to him, in the old days the Indians had a great aversion to killing one of their number who had become mentally deranged. So it was their custom to blindfold the victim and take him far away — into enemy territory. There they would release him, weaponless, so that he would either die or be killed by enemies. This resulted in a demented, wild, savage creature, barefoot & starved, at loose in the country: that was the weetigo. This is the first rational explanation of the phenomenon that I have encountered.'

Mimigwessos

Adam Ballantyne: You ask me about the mimigwessos. That is one thing which I know is true. The old men, long years ago, went to the mimigwessos for their medicine. To do this, they went to Deschambault Lake, and there to a certain island which has a great steep rock and many big stones at the bottom and many caves. In these live the mimigwessos. The men would go there to a certain place which had been known for a long time, and place a piece of hide, like a handkerchief, on the ground. Then they would ask for the kind of medicine that they wished; medicine for pain in the back, or pain in the head, or pain anywhere else. But they would tell just what kind of pain the medicine was for. Then they would go away, and come back in a short time. The piece of hide the size of a handkerchief would be all tied up in a bag and in it would be the medicine for which they asked, all powdered up. I myself know that this is true, for I have gone there and spread a flat cloth and asked the mimigwesso for medicine and, sure enough, when I came back I found it all tied up. This is true. I know for I have done so and have some of this medicine in my tent. Sometimes one can hear the mimigwessos laughing in the cliffs.

Nehemiah Charles: The mimigwessos had a short nose. They were only about this high [four feet]. People, but not all people, would go and get medicine from them. That is, certain people. To do this, they would strip off a piece of birchbark. No, they did not use a handkerchief, or hide, as you suggest. They laid the bark down in front of the place where the mimigwessos lived. It would be filled with medicine when they came back. In front of the mimigwesso's house one would find a birch tree growing, and you could see where the people had stripped off bark for this purpose.

The Bear

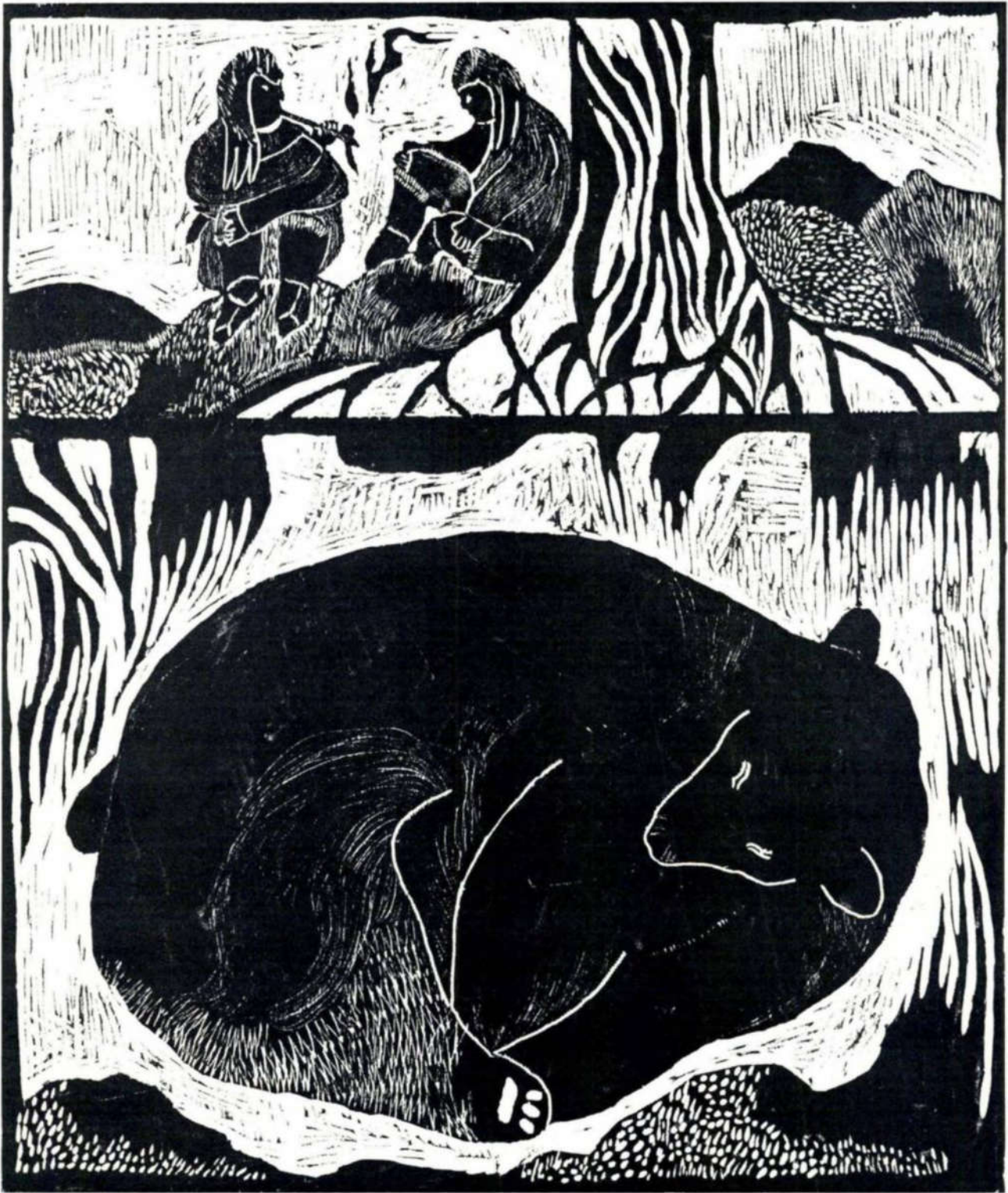
Downes: As among the Naskapi, the Montagnais, the Ojibway, and to a lesser degree the Chipewyan, the bear is considered an animal of particular powers and one to placate and observe with the most exacting rites. Indeed, the bear is considered by some Crees in the light of being almost another type of man. They speak of his 'hands' rather than of paws, and he is often referred to in circumlocution as 'Old Grandfather'. I have known of one Cree who, when asked if he ate bear meat, replied indignantly, 'Do you think I am a cannibal?'

Adam Ballantyne: When hunting bears before break-up, when they were in their houses (and this was not often done), it was the custom, before the bear came out, to talk to it, calling him 'grandfather' and asking his forgiveness. Then the men would wait and wait, until the bear gave his answer, and he would say, if all was done correctly, 'It is all right, my children, for I will come back again (into this world as another bear), after I am dead.' This is what always happened long ago.

John Ballantyne: One of the best ways of all to find out about the future is this. One should take the long gut of the bear and clean it carefully. Then, one should think for a long time about both the bear and that which one is eager to learn. Then one takes the bear's gut and puts one end of the hollow tube to one's ear. Before long, one will hear a deep rumbling. It is the puagan of the bear. Then one will hear voices, and the puagan of the bear will tell one through this tube that which one wishes to know of the future.

* * *

The future was to virtually erase what little remained of such time-honoured beliefs. When Downes, saddened by the changes that had swept the post-war North, made a final brief trip to The Pas, Flin Flon, and Amisk Lake by Jeep in 1951, he learned that Adam Ballantyne was still living; but time was short, a flight into Pelican proved impossible, and he was forced to depart without seeing the indefatigable Cree who epitomised so faithfully all of the Indians who had once shared their knowledge with him. ♦



'Prayer to Great Black One'.

The Cave and Basin Hot Springs

By David Smyth

THE CENTENNIAL OF CANADA'S national parks is being celebrated in 1985 and a large part of these celebrations will be centred on the Cave and Basin Hot Springs in Banff National Park. Known as 'The Birthplace of Canada's National Parks', the Cave and Basin have undergone a multi-million dollar facelift over the last four years. The magnificent 1914 bathhouse and pool have been rehabilitated. The Basin pool, altered and enlarged over the years, has been returned to its nineteenth-century state, while bordering it a replica of the 1887 bathhouse with its 1903 renovations has been constructed. All this was done to restore a site which once drew thousands of bathers each year (but which by the mid-1970s had become somewhat derelict), and to provide an interpretive centre in which the history and present state of Parks Canada can be told.

The Cave and Basin are located in Banff National Park on the north side of Sulphur Mountain, just across the Bow River from the town of Banff. The mountain is permeated with hot springs which emit hot sulphurous mineral water from numerous places. Two of the major hot springs are those at the Cave and Basin. Though changed greatly since their development by Parks Canada and its predecessors, the following is a description of these springs by J.M. Gordon, a Dominion Lands Agent from Calgary, who visited the site prior to any man-made alterations having been made:

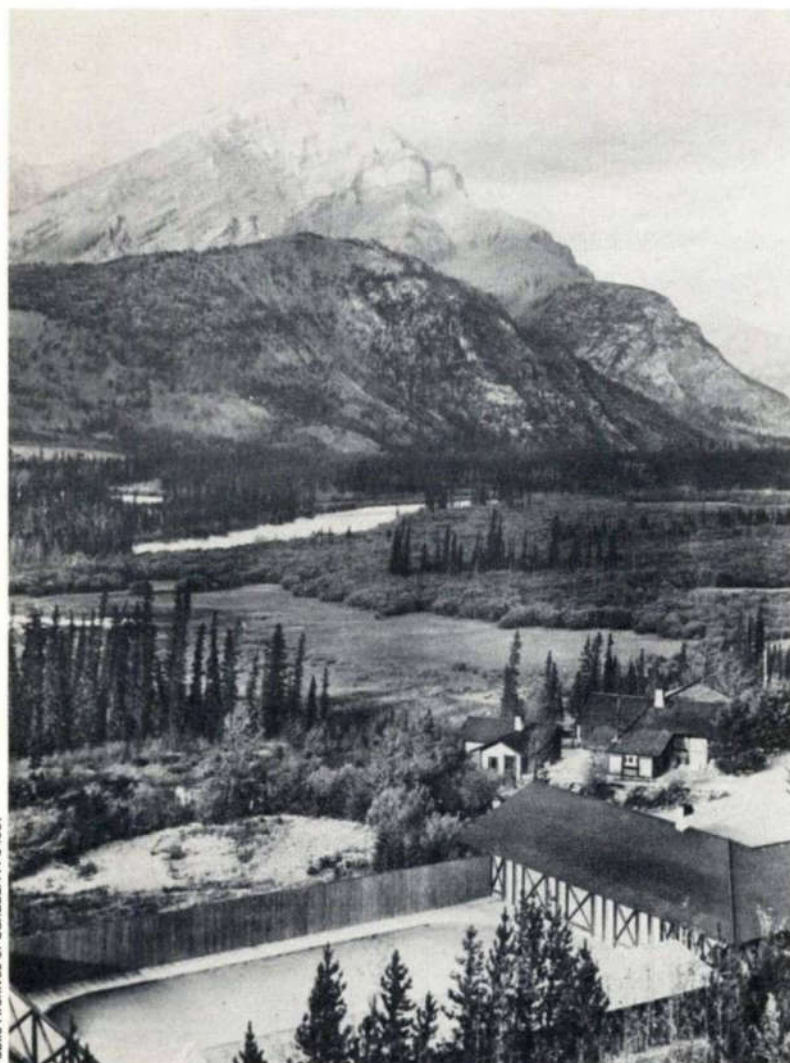
The Springs are two in number and they are only separated from each other by a wall of rock. One of them is in the open air and flows into a basin about 15 feet in diameter. The other is enclosed in a cave and is reached by ascending about 40 feet up the face of the hill and then descending about 45 feet through a small hole. The water flowing from this is caught in the basin between 25 and 30 feet in diameter and having a depth of about 3½ feet. The water in both springs is very strongly impregnated with sulphur — the outer one being the stronger. The temperature of the water is I should think about 90 degrees [F].

David Smyth is a historian with Parks Canada in Ottawa, and the author of several published articles on the history of the fur trade.

In winter the steam rising from the spring was visible for a considerable distance.

The Stoney and other Indian inhabitants of this region were certainly aware of the hot springs long before white men entered the area. Sir James Hector of the Palliser Expedition first noted the presence of hot springs in this vicinity in 1859 and the Reverend John McDougall was probably aware of them as early as 1863. It was not, however, until the 'discovery' of the Cave and Basin springs in November 1883 by Frank McCabe and William and Thomas McCardell that the existence of the hot springs became widely known. McCabe and the McCardells were workmen employed in the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Shortly after the discovery, the three built a small cabin by the Cave, which they frequented that winter. News of the springs spread rapidly among their fellow workers and many visited the site. The Upper Hot Springs, located farther up Sulphur Mountain and issuing hotter water, were found in 1884 by railway workers. By 1885 several of them, including Theodore Sebring, George Whitman and Frank McCabe, had also erected cabins there. No claims to title to the springs or to any land about them were made by any of these men until early 1885. In March of that year Frank McCabe wrote to the Minister of the Interior and applied for title to this land on behalf of himself, the McCardells, Archie McNeil and C.W.H. Sansom. This would not be the last such letter claiming title by right of discovery but it was the first step towards government involvement with the hot springs.

The Department of the Interior replied to the claimants' letters and in June 1885 sent J.M. Gordon from Calgary to inspect the sites in question. That summer and fall there followed a flurry of activity regarding the Banff hot springs. Legal wranglings arose over the sale of all or part of McCabe's and the McCardells' claims of right of first discovery. More private development by enterprising entrepreneurs occurred as many were quick to exploit the commercial potential of these reputedly health-giving waters. And the waters were touted as having wonderful curative properties; everything from rheumatism, blood diseases and syphilis supposedly succumbed to their power. In the fall of 1885 Doctor George T. Orton of Calgary, a former



In the summer of 1985 the famous Cave and Basin Hot Springs at Banff will reopen to the public, after nine years and a multi-million dollar facelift.

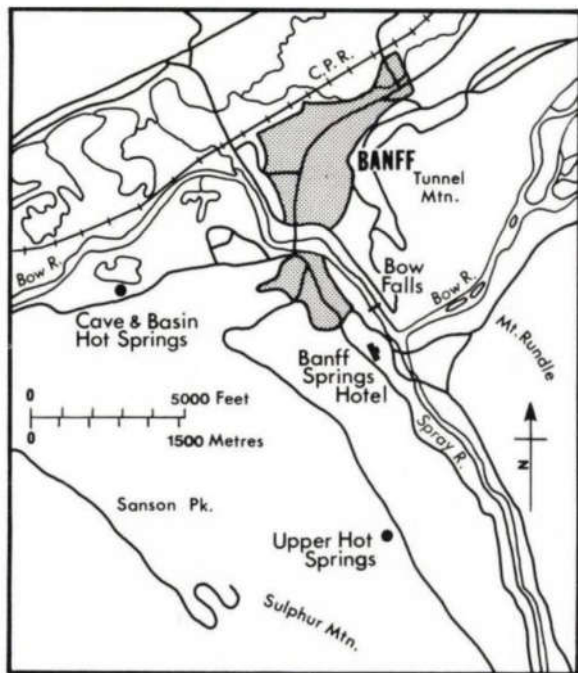
The Basin pool in the early 1900s, with the 1887 bathhouse built in the 'Swiss style', as it appeared after the 1903 renovations. The two smaller buildings are the caretakers' quarters.

Member of Parliament, wrote to Deputy Minister Alex M. Burgess stating that he had already sent patients to 'take the waters' at Banff. He extolled the virtues of the hot springs and the magnificent mountains and concluded by saying, 'My opinion is with yours', that the springs should be claimed by the government. Obviously Burgess, the highest ranking civil servant in the Department of the Interior, was already in favour of the government's withholding the hot springs from private ownership.

This concept of public reservation of natural or scenic resources for preservation or control of development by the government was definitely a radical departure in Canada. Its origins were in the example of the United States; it was nurtured by the Canadian Pacific Railway. The United States had led the world in the public setting aside of natural resources for preservation and enjoyment of future generations. In 1832 the federal government there had created the Arkansas Hot Springs Reserve. In 1864 it had given the Yosemite

Valley and Mariposa Grove of Big Trees to the State of California to be held for public use and recreation. Finally, in 1872, the Congress of the United States passed legislation creating Yellowstone National Park, the first such park in the world. Australia soon followed suit with the creation of Royal National Park in 1879.

With these examples before them it was not long afterwards that officers of the Canadian Pacific Railway, upon seeing the awesome beauty of the Rockies and other western mountain chains, recommended a like practice in Canada. In 1883 Sir Sandford Fleming suggested the setting aside of one or more national parks in the Rockies. That same year a national park reserve at Lac des Arcs was suggested by Sir William Van Horne, who envisioned a private villa on an island in the middle of the lake. Van Horne's and the CPR's support of the idea of national parks was not completely altruistic, for the expectation was that tourists would flock to these proposed parks — riding CPR



trains, eating at CPR restaurants and staying at CPR hotels. By the summer of 1885, amid more claims to right of first discovery of the Upper Hot Springs and the Cave and Basin Hot Springs, the CPR was actively urging the Department of the Interior to take control of the hot springs at Banff, as had the Government of the United States in the case of the Arkansas Hot Springs.

Support for reservation of the springs was growing on all sides by that fall. Members of Parliament who had earlier visited Banff over the new CPR line were in favour of reservation, as was Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald himself. Within the Department of the Interior, Burgess was ardently supported by William Pearce, the Superintendent of Mines and an early advocate of the national park concept. After visiting the hot springs in September 1885, Pearce used all of his considerable influence to have the area set aside. As a necessary first step prior to reservation the Department had the four sections surrounding the springs surveyed in late September and early October. Thomas White, the newly appointed Minister of the Interior, visited Banff in October 1885 on a trip through the West. Shortly thereafter from Calgary he instructed Burgess to prepare a recommendation for the Privy Council to reserve sections of land about the hot springs, the boundaries to be those outlined by Pearce in an earlier memorandum to White.

On 25 November 1885, Order in Council No. 2197 received approval, reserving for future park use an area of about 10 square miles on the north slope of

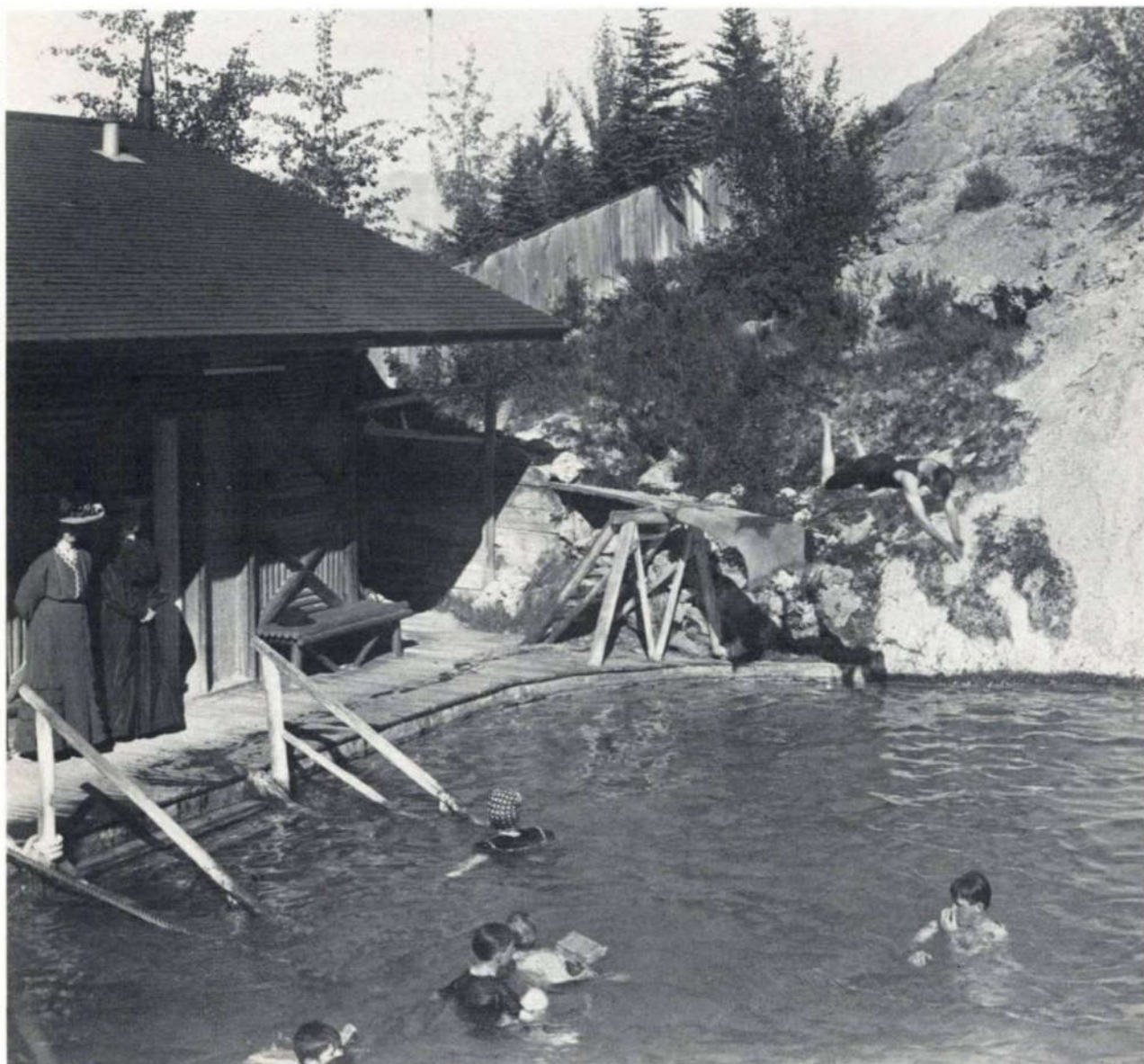
Sulphur Mountain. The hot springs were the reason for creating this, Canada's first park reserve. The Order in Council read in part:

... there have been discovered several hot mineral springs which promise to be of great sanitary advantage to the public, and in order that proper control of the lands surrounding these springs may be vested in the Crown, the said lands in the territory including said springs and in their immediate neighbourhood, be and they are hereby reserved from sale or settlement or squatting.

The reserve included the Cave and Basin, the Upper Hot Springs, others known as the Middle Springs and virtually all the area where numerous smaller outlets of hot sulphur water were located. The Cave and Basin and the Upper Hot Springs had already undergone some private development by the early discoverers, and several latecomers as well. The only other major springs in the area, the Middle Springs, briefly in this century had their water diverted to a fish hatchery but have not since been developed.

Following the November 1885 reservation of the hot springs area the government was faced with the problem of what to do with those individuals who claimed rights to the springs by reason of discovery or those who had spent money making improvements there in expectation of return on their investment. Among those in the latter category was D.B. Woodworth, a politician from Nova Scotia who claimed to have purchased McCabe's and the McCardells' rights in the springs and also claimed to have spent more than \$4,000 in developing them. Woodworth sought compensation from the Department of the Interior. The Minister replied that the federal government did not 'recognize any right of discovery in connection with the hot springs at Banff'. Under constant pressure from Woodworth and other claimants, White relented. It was decided that some form of compensation should be made to those who had spent money in building facilities at the springs.

William Pearce, the federal officer most conversant with the problem, was chosen to head the claims inquiry which was held at Banff in July 1886. Depositions were read and testimony was heard from 14 different witnesses, all claiming either financial remuneration or simply recognition as first discoverer. The Department accepted Pearce's recommendations and awarded compensation to four men: David Keefe, Frank McCabe, William McCardell and D.B. Woodworth. Pearce did not confer the title of first discoverer on any one person. Yet from the evidence presented at the inquiry it seems that Willard B. Younge, from Ohio, was the first white man whose discovery of the Cave and Basin was documented; he had built a shack and lived at the site during the winter of 1875-1876. David



The Basin bathhouse and pool, c. 1900.

Keefe may have been the first white man to discover the Upper Hot Springs, in 1884, but certainly, whether the original discoverers or not, Keefe, McCabe and the McCardells deserve recognition for bringing the springs to the attention of the world at large for the first time.

Interest in the establishment of more mountain park reserves quickly grew in many sectors: the general public, both sides of the House of Commons, the Department of the Interior and, not least of all, the CPR. There was close co-operation between the government and the CPR both in the fostering of the national park concept and in the actual selection of

potential park locations. It was not just a case of wanting the heavily government-subsidized railway to flourish. The CPR seemed to be virtually the only practical means of access to these newly opened up regions. In early 1886, in response to outside pressure for the creation of more park reserves Pearce recommended several possible sites to White, who then forwarded the information to the CPR. Railway officials were generally favourable to Pearce's recommendations but advised that one of its officers would soon be travelling in the region and could perhaps make further suggestions. Later that year the Minister accepted the CPR's suggested locations and



Main pool at the Cave and Basin Springs, 1941.

by an Order in Council of 10 October 1886 four more mountain park reserves were set aside. Though two of these reserves were later deemed inappropriate for parks and were abolished, the remaining two formed the nuclei of what were to become Yoho and Glacier national parks.

By 1887 a great deal of private and public development had taken place at Banff. George A. Stewart, a Dominion Land Surveyor, had been appointed in early 1886 to conduct a full legal survey of the Banff reserve. By the end of that year not only had he been ordered to extend his surveys to include an area of about 260 square miles but he was put in charge of the planning and supervision of the development of the park reserve. He was formally appointed its first superintendent on 1 January 1887. Under his direction roads were installed, improvements and enlargements were made to the natural bathing areas at the Cave and Basin, two government bathhouses, with change rooms for both men and women, were erected there and a tunnel was blasted through to the Cave to allow easier visitor access. Already, or soon to be, completed in the vicinity were private bathhouses and hotels at the Upper Hot Springs, the CPR's Banff Springs Hotel, a major sanitarium and many smaller private establishments.



Architect's drawing of the renovated pool, stone bathhouse and belvederes, originally constructed in 1912-14. The 1887-1903 Basin pool and building (not visible in this drawing) have also been recreated.

The waters for these privately owned operations were all supplied from the Upper Hot Springs. The water at this site was hotter than that at the Cave and Basin and it was also believed to have greater curative properties. Throughout their early history the Cave and Basin attracted more recreationally inclined bathers, while the Upper Hot Springs drew a higher percentage of those 'taking the waters' for their therapeutic value.

Thomas White set the legislative wheels in motion in early 1887 to establish the Banff reserve as Canada's first national park, and only the third such park in the world. Using the Yellowstone National Park Act as a model, William Pearce drew up the first draft of what came to be known as the Rocky Mountains Park Act. White introduced the bill in the House of Commons on 22 April 1887 and it was vigorously debated on 29 April and 3 May. There was almost no opposition to the idea of creating a national park. John V. Ellis, the newly elected Liberal M.P. from St John City (N.B.), did state 'I think that the whole plan of this measure is very objectionable. I do not think that the country wants such a park, or that it is able to pay for it.' He represented a small minority. The vast majority of the House was in favour of the park. The debate centred on three areas: the 'impropriety' of expenditures already made without the consent of the House, the extent of political patronage possible under the discretionary powers given to the Minister of the Interior, and the question of future expenditures related to the park. Sir John A. Macdonald extolled its benefits, not only as a health resort but as a potential financial boon to, not drain on, government coffers. He stated,

I do not suppose in any portion of the world there can be found a spot, taken altogether, which combines so many attractions and which promises in as great a degree not only large pecuniary advantage to the Dominion, but much prestige to the whole country by attracting the population, not only on this continent, but of Europe to this place. It has all the qualifications necessary to make it a great place of resort.

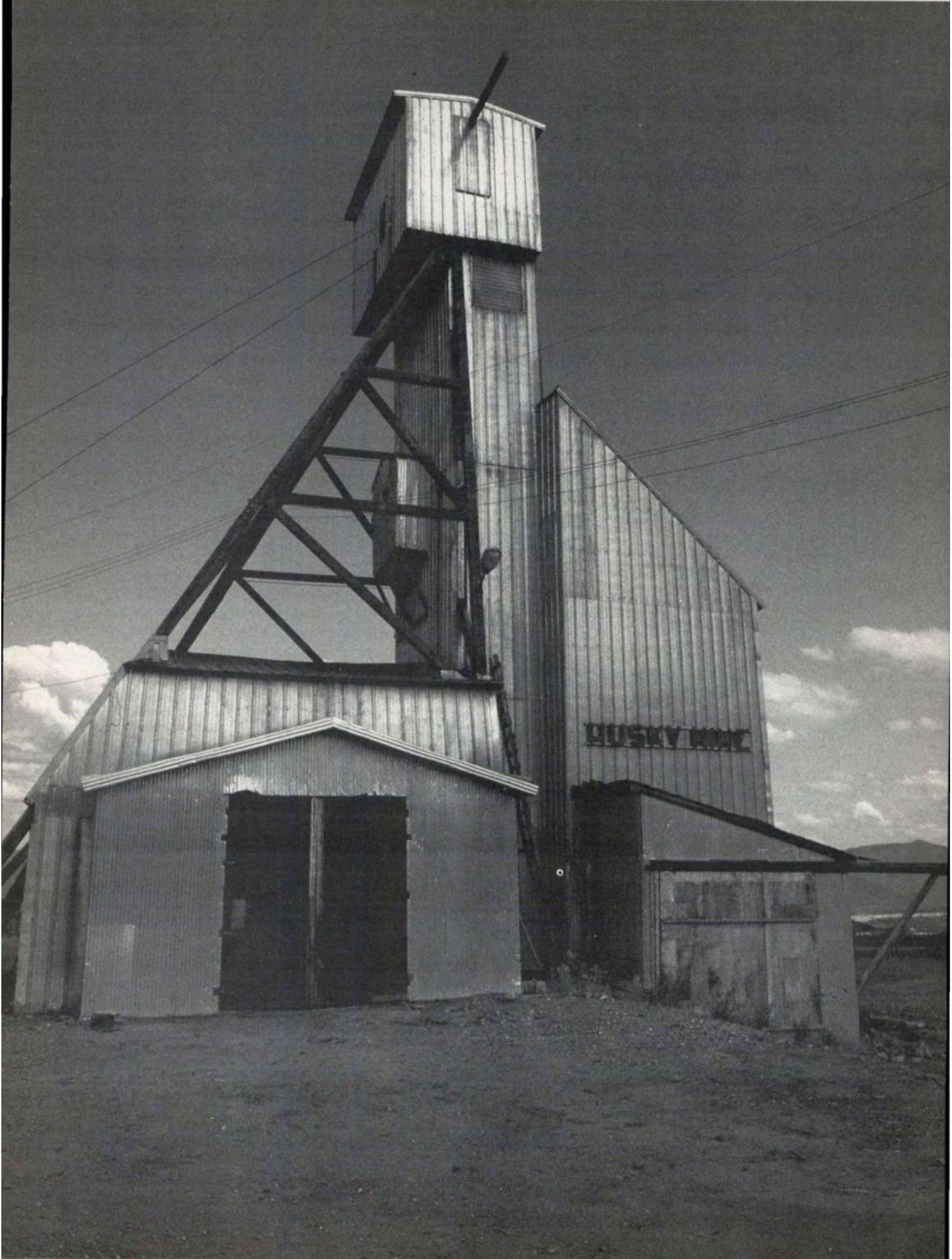
The bill received third and final reading on 6 May and on 23 June 1887 royal assent was given to 'An Act Respecting the Rocky Mountains Park of Canada'. The park was renamed Banff National Park in 1930.

The Act stated that the area was 'hereby reserved and set apart as a public park and pleasure ground for the benefit, advantage and enjoyment of the people of Canada.' In less than two years the original reserve of 10 square miles, encompassing little more than the hot springs, had become Canada's first national park and covered an area of 260 square miles. During this time four other park reserves, already noted, had been set aside. With public support and persistent, far-

sighted government officials such as William Pearce and later the Minister of the Interior, Thomas M. Daly, the more than somewhat disorganized and under-financed national park and park reserve 'system' grew by the early 1900s to include, besides those reserves already mentioned, the beginnings of Waterton and Jasper parks and the addition of Lake Louise to an enlarged Rocky Mountains Park. Today there are 31 natural parks under Parks Canada control, stretching from Pacific Rim to Terra Nova, Pointe Pelee to Auyuittuq, and some 80 national historic parks and major sites. Thus, though the establishment of the first reserves and parks was done more from a desire to create tourist and health resorts in the newly accessible mountain ranges of the West than to preserve the natural wilderness heritage of Canada, the entire national park system, which now conserves more wilderness area than any other national park system in the world, grew from the original hot springs reserve at Banff.

Over the years a great deal has changed at the Banff hot springs. A government bathhouse, in the 'Swiss style', was built at each of the Cave and Basin pools in 1887 and these were greatly expanded and renovated in 1903. The following year, a new pool was excavated there to accommodate an ever increasing number of bathers. In 1905 a government bathhouse was opened at the Upper Hot Springs, after fire had destroyed the principal privately operated facilities. Visitor demand continued to grow. In 1912-1914 an imposing new stone bathhouse and outdoor pool, the latter then the largest in Canada, were built at the Cave and Basin, replacing the existing Cave bathhouse. They were the design of Walter S. Painter, a former chief architect of the CPR. By the 1930s the facilities at both locations were proving inadequate to meet the needs of the visiting public. The government erected a new bathhouse at the Upper Hot Springs in 1932. Three years later the rustic wooden 1887-1903 bathhouse at the Basin was torn down and replaced with a new stone and wood structure. By the 1970s the Cave and Basin site had deteriorated greatly, due both to the action of the hot sulphur water and the sinking of the buildings' foundations into the porous tufa rock upon which they had been erected. By 1976 the Cave and Basin were closed to the public.

This summer the Cave and Basin Hot Springs will officially reopen with the 1914 bathhouse and pool renovated and the 1887-1903 Basin building recreated. Bathers once again will be able to enjoy the pleasure of swimming in the naturally heated outdoor pool. The centennial of Canada's national parks is being celebrated across the system but its focus appropriately is at Banff. Though its title really ought to be shared with the Upper Hot Springs, 'The Birthplace of Canada's National Parks' is not a misnomer when applied to the Cave and Basin Hot Springs. ♦



KENO CITY

By D. M. (Mac) Treilhard

The author, a graduate in history from Concordia University in Montreal, is an underground miner at Con Mine in Yellowknife. He writes a syndicated column 'Mining Bits' and is preparing a book manuscript 'Miners' Lives'.

'Most of them [the people of Keno] are hippies from the sixties and seventies who are now making a living as miners.'

KENO CITY is a wonderfully picturesque town. It lies a scant 186 miles from the Arctic Circle in the northern Yukon. Despite a long and colourful history, the community is virtually unknown outside the territory.

To reach Keno by car, the traveller leaves the Alaska Highway 20 miles west of Whitehorse and drives north to Stewart Crossing. There he will leave the stream of summer tourist traffic bound for the Klondike and take a road running east, which first by-passes Mayo and then runs through the company mining town of Elsa and along a further nine miles of choking dust and spine-jarring potholes before terminating in Keno. Keno is the end of the road. Nothing but uninhabited bush lies between it and the Mackenzie Mountains another 150 miles to the east.

Keno occupies a plateau nestled between two mountains which have yielded fortunes in silver. To the northwest, a gap in the mountains permits a magnificent view down the McQuesten River Valley.

As has been the case elsewhere in the North, the first white people to explore the area were prospectors

in search of precious metals. They were men who had failed to stake valuable ground in the Klondike in 1898, and so had moved on to other regions in their search for gold. They found some of the yellow metal in creeks near Keno and small-scale placer mining had commenced there before the turn of the century.

In 1906, the first important silver discovery was made: the Silver King Mine, which operated intermittently until 1918. One of the greatest difficulties confronting the miners was that of getting their product to market. Lacking a mill, high-grade ore was first picked by hand from waste rock and then packed in bags to be trucked to Mayo. There it was loaded on river steamers for the 560-mile run to Whitehorse on the Stewart and Yukon rivers. Once in Whitehorse, it was shipped to Skagway on the narrow-gauge White Pass and Yukon Railway where it was loaded on ocean freighters and sent south for smelting. Only ore with at least a hundred ounces of silver to the ton could be handled profitably in this way.

When more discoveries were made on Keno Hill in 1919, a staking rush ensued which led to strikes on several other nearby properties. This activity drew the attention of the Yukon Gold Company — a Guggenheim concern — which was then engaged in dredging

The headframe of Husky Mine, recently reopened by the United Keno Hill Mines.

operations in the Klondike. The Yukon Gold Company formed Keno Hill Ltd. which operated several mines in the area until the early twenties when the Treadwell-Yukon Corporation Company acquired control of the Keno mines.

Under the direction of the geologist Livingston Wernecke, the company's operations rapidly expanded and Keno entered a boom period. Those men who were not in the company's employ would trap, placer mine, prospect or cut timber to feed the wood-burning power plants. A variety of businesses flourished in the town, including several sporting houses.

Then, with Wernecke's death in 1941, the depletion of readily accessible ore and the labour shortage brought on by World War II, the mines shut down. Many of Keno's residents left, but enough remained to warrant maintaining the town's post office and other services.

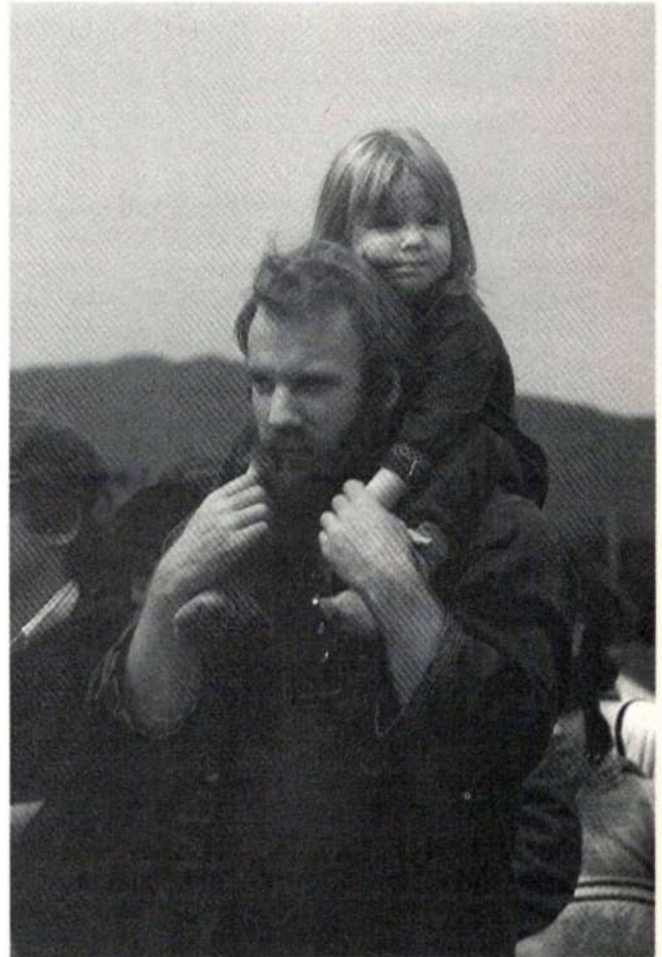
When a new company was formed in 1947, the mines and the mill were rehabilitated and the centre of mining activity shifted to Elsa, a company townsite nine miles to the west. Keno never again grew to the size it had been prior to the war. It became what it is today, a residential satellite of Elsa.

For several years after the war, mining activity in the area remained severely restricted because the riverboats were able to accommodate no more than 12,000 tons of freight each way in a season. This problem was solved when an all-weather road was completed in 1950, connecting Mayo with the Alaska Highway. The new road made mining more economical, as it permitted operation on a year-round basis and did away with the need to stockpile supplies for the long northern winters. For a time, the Keno area mines were the largest silver producers in Canada and the third largest in the world.

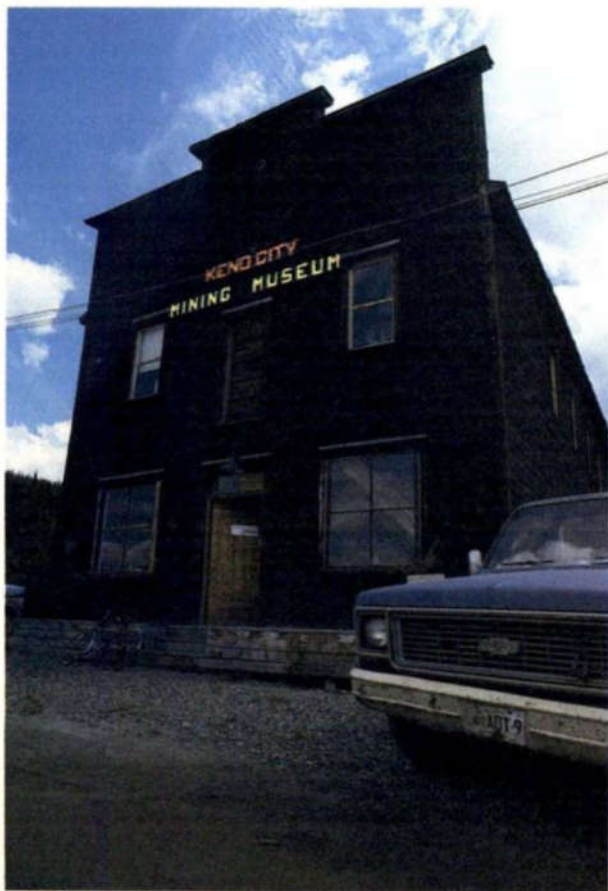
During the 1960s and 1970s, mining activity in the area alternately slumped and prospered according to the level of world silver prices. The recent economic depression has led to the closure of most of the Yukon's mines, including those at Keno Hill. The shutdown has caused Keno's population to grow, however, as some former company employees have opted to move to Keno from Elsa rather than leave for the South.

When I re-visited the town in the summer of 1983, I found a community of about 50 people patiently waiting for the mines to reopen. A few of them were still employed by the company to perform essential maintenance work, while others were prospecting or operating small placer mines.

Though there are some modern frame buildings, Keno is still predominantly a town of log cabins. Darlene Gauld, manager of the Keno City Hotel, likens Keno to a ghost town. 'It's just a collection of shacks, without toilets or running water. I'm the only person with a shower, because the hotel has a well. All the other buildings, including the cafe, are on tanks.'



A Keno Hill miner with his young daughter.



A relic of the days of steam power.

The residents have converted this two-storey building — reputed to have been a sporting house in the thirties — into an impressive mining museum.



A scooptram parked in front of the portal to the Silver King Mine.



Ken Mackenzie prepares to blast frozen muck from the entrance to the Silver King Mine.



'Windy' John Holmstrom recalls the days when Keno City was a boomtown.

When I asked Darlene about the people who chose to live in Keno, she said, 'They are people who have quit the rat-race down south, yet they aren't rebels. In fact, most of them are hippies from the sixties and seventies who are now making a living as miners.'

For entertainment in a town that lacks even a movie theatre, Darlene said, 'We entertain each other. We have our own recreation hall and there are always parties.'

Keno has no town council. Instead, the townspeople have formed a community club where they meet to resolve any problems of mutual concern. The club receives a small annual payment from the government for garbage disposal, and that is about all. On their own initiative they built the recreation hall with volunteer labour, turned a tiny unused church into a library, and converted a large two-storey building — reputed to have been a sporting house in the thirties — into an impressive mining museum.

Drago Kokanov, owner of the Sourdough Cafe — the only restaurant in town — was the moving force behind the organization of the museum. A resident of Keno for twenty years, he is convinced that the town has the potential to become a tourist attraction capable of rivalling Dawson City. With this end in mind, he is petitioning the territorial government for assistance in building tourist accommodation facilities.

Of the town's many colourful characters, 'Windy' John Holmstrom is the last old-timer who can recall Keno's boom days in the thirties. Once a wind-jammer sailor in the North Sea, he emigrated to Canada in 1926. He farmed on the prairies and logged in British Columbia before going north to Dawson early in the depression. There he worked on the gold dredges and later ran his own placer operation. Since moving to Keno, he has owned a variety of small businesses, trapped, prospected and mined.

Today, Holmstrom runs his own one-man mine and stores his high-grade silver ore in 45-gallon barrels beside his small two-room cabin. He is a man who welcomes company and any opportunity to talk of the past. His fondest memories are of the paddlewheelers which used to ply the Yukon River between Dawson and Whitehorse. In the days when the Yukon was still a rough frontier, the riverboats were glittering islands offering the amenities of civilized life otherwise largely unavailable in the territory. He tells of holidaying on the boats for two and three weeks at a time — 'beautiful trips during which everybody got acquainted in no time and we'd dance and sing day and night'. Then after a pause, he said with cheerful finality, 'Those were happy days.' ♦

This article was made possible by the assistance of The Canada Council and the Royal Canadian Geographical Society.

THE CANOE
A History of the Craft from Panama
to the Arctic

By Kenneth G. Roberts and Philip Shackleton. Macmillan of Canada, Toronto, 1983. 279 pp., illus. \$50.00.

Reviewed by Kirk A.W. Whipper

The Canoe is an inspired achievement. It is a most compelling fusion of romance and technical revelation. A canoe is often perceived as a simple device intended for primitive conveyance. Authors Roberts and Shackleton succeed in dispelling that limited notion early in their work. Further, they reveal the fact that they have spent years in researching what should be recognized widely as the most important presentation on canoes yet published.

The book, whose cover design is a fine painting of a fur-trade canoe by artist Frances Anne Hopkins, contains a balanced view of the canoe in North America. All regions are well represented under a clas-

sification that is both novel and logical. In the case of the 'Dugouts', for example, the authors commence with the Caribbean where European explorers first encountered the hollowed-log canoe. The scene moves to each part of the continent including the northern areas in a most intriguing survey of dugout-canoe variations. This approach gives to the reader a fine insight into construction modes, showing the relationship between needs and design.

The Canoe begins with rafts and floats, proceeds to dugouts, skin boats, bark canoes and concludes with the modern canoe. This sequence reasonably reflects what was the chronological development of the canoe in North America. Indeed, organization is one of the book's strongest features.

The variety and rarity of photographs and sketches must have demanded the utmost of care and rigour. Archival materials related to watercraft are not readily available. The reader clearly benefits from the

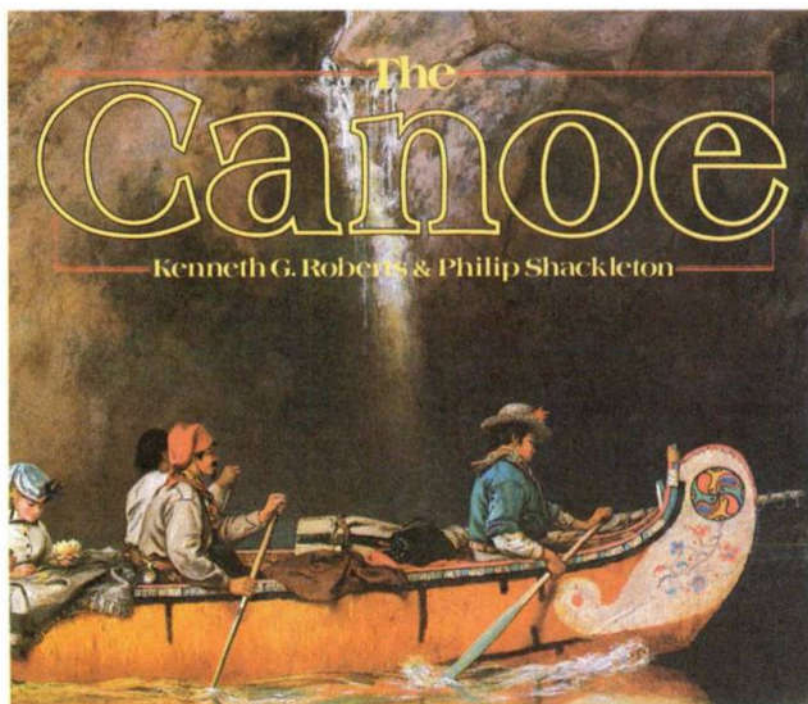
diligence and untiring patience demonstrated by the authors in their acquisition of material and further in the important decision on what should finally be included in the book. Another asset in reference to the photographs and sketches is the excellent series of captions which are well condensed and include scientifically sound material.

It is significant that the authors created a work that would stand as a tribute to the native people, a goal which no other similar publication to date has achieved. That commendable intent is clearly stated in the closing sentence of the authors' introduction which states: 'To the native peoples past and present who have built and paddled the craft we call canoe, we hope this book may be an acceptable tribute.'

Quotations from the diaries and journals of early explorers have been provided reflecting again the care that was taken in the research. In this, the authors not only evoke the confidence of the reader but also reveal their contagious sincerity and enthusiasm for their subject.

Building techniques have been included for those particularly interested in the craftsmanship of the canoe. Pages 20 and 21, for example, are excellent examples of the construction of a dugout by the Caribs of Dominica. Pages 142 - 143 discuss the creation of an arctic skin boat. From such basic information it would give to an aspiring craftsman a good start in creating replicas of those specimens.

It can be claimed that the section on the 'Modern Canoe' is limited and indeed it is in some respects. It could be argued, however, that the recency and accessibility of material for this period make a detailed treatment in *The Canoe* unnecessary. There are publications in existence which deal reasonably adequately with the past 125 years. What Roberts and Shackleton have provided is a foundation and definitive statement on canoes of antiquity.



Finally this commentary would be remiss if it did not refer to the bibliography as the finest compendium of references yet provided on watercraft literature. This is a most important if not the most important contribution which will serve as an invaluable resource for watercraft scholars for some time to come.

Professor Kirk Wipper, of the School of Physical and Health Education, University of Toronto, is director of the Kanawa International Museum, which houses one of the greatest collections of canoes in the world.

RENDEZVOUS

Selected Papers of the Fourth North American Fur Trade Conference, 1981

Edited by Thomas C. Buckley. Minnesota Historical Society, St Paul, Minnesota, 1984. 231 pp., illus. \$7.50 (U.S. funds) paper.

Reviewed by Timothy Ball

The long-awaited Selected Papers of the Fourth North American Fur Trade Conference held at both Grand Portage, Michigan and Old Fort William, Thunder Bay, Ontario in 1981 were circulated in the summer of 1984. They represent a wide selection of topics, in twenty-one papers, that are collected into five groups titled: 'The French and the Fur Trade'; 'The Fur Trade Companies'; 'Indians and the Fur Trade'; 'Fur Trade Sites'; and 'Fur Trade in the Great Lakes Region'.

The first thing that strikes a new attendee at a Fur Trade Conference is the variety of participants, but it soon becomes apparent that there are two major groups: academics and those I like to call friends of the fur trade. It is a rather unique blend of people that calls for a balance between the purely academic and the more dilettantist aspects of history. Both are of equal importance and necessity to a full understanding of the fur trade and its role in North American history. Obviously there are non-academics interested in all aspects of history; in most instances they represent a different, but very essential, part of the area

of interest. In my opinion the fur trade of North America is different in this relationship because of many factors. It is the only source for many people of their heritage; it provides valuable information on a pre-government society; and it has invaluable information about the relationship between the Indian and European cultures that can lead to a more understanding future.

Recognition of this rather unique relationship is provided in the list of acknowledgements and a comment in the Introduction that misgivings about low attendance were unnecessary because of the 'zeal of fur trade scholars and devotees'. Despite this it must have been difficult to decide which papers should be published and what format they should take to achieve a balance between the academic purist and the devotee who does not want to be swamped with jargon and footnotes. The decision is exacerbated by the fact that most of the authors are academics and are bound by certain traditions, formalities, and styles. The editor has done a good job of presenting material that is for the most part very readable and with sufficient anecdotes to be of interest to the average devotee. Sprinkled among these papers are others, or parts of others, that touch on very important new directions for the future. For example, there is Donald Bibeau's admonition: 'The time may have finally arrived when tribes can, indeed *must*, write their own histories, including their experience of the fur trade.'

It is impossible to comment on all of the articles and it is almost as difficult to pick out one or two without offending others or suggesting the relative merits of one paper over another. It is the strength of collected papers that they offer a little of something for almost everyone and a comparison of the original program with the list of papers selected shows that the editor has achieved that goal. Of course there are always one or two papers that would have been different on each person's list but that is the privilege of the editor.

Reading all of the papers does allow one to identify certain themes



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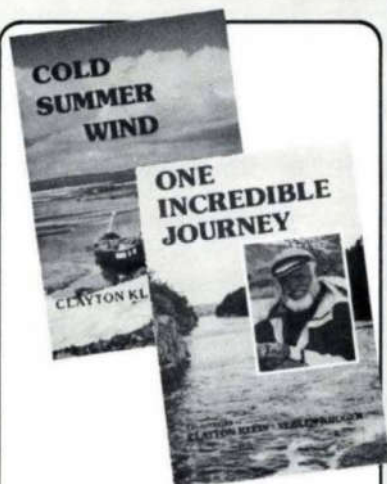
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that are not a function of the editor's selection but rather a reflection of the areas of interest and direction of current research. There appear to be three major trends. The relationship between Indians and the fur trade; social history and particularly the trials and tribulations of daily life; and an interest in the environment and its impact on the human condition. These reflect the general trends in historical research but they also reflect an awareness of the need for understanding the total society rather than just the leadership.

In conclusion, this volume of papers reflects the unique blending of devotees and academics although the latter dominate because they gave most of the papers. It will be necessary to be vigilant against the Fur Trade Conference becoming a narrow academic affair with the Selected Papers becoming proceedings of such an event. There is no shortage of specialist journals and opportunities for presenting the more esoteric aspects of research; therefore it is essential that the Fur Trade Conference and its publication should remain in the crucial role of bringing together the two groups and transmitting the esoteric research to the devotee.

Dr Ball, assistant professor in the department of geography, University of Winnipeg, has published a number of papers related to historical climatology.

SYRUP PAILS AND GOPHER TAILS

Memories of the One-Room School

By John C. Charyk. Western Producer Prairie Books, Saskatoon, 1983. 143 pp., illus. \$19.95.

Reviewed by Miriam Waddington

Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails is too light-hearted a title for this moving and serious collection of memories of the one-room school. The schools that Charyk describes happen to have been in the three prairie provinces, but they could just as well

have been located anywhere else in Canada. John Charyk's career as a teacher and high-school principal in Alberta spanned the years between 1928 and 1973 and no doubt he stored up many experiences during that time. Yet the memories recorded in *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails* are not just Charyk's; much of the text consists of stories either remembered and written, or told to an interviewer (not always Charyk himself) by former students and others. This group of reminiscences is therefore an important collective memoir by those who actually faced the problems and lived through the experience of educating or being educated in a one-room school. Charyk's book belongs to the growing tradition of oral history which had its beginnings in the nineteenth century with the work of Henry Mayhew, Charles Booth and the Webbs in England, and with historians like Jules Michelet in France. About his own interviews, Michelet wrote in 1846: 'If one be not able to converse with . . . Lamartine, we must go into the fields and chat with a peasant.' And about his documents he said, '... they are not papers, but lives of men, of provinces, and of nations.'

The whole matter of oral history and its function deserves a fuller discussion than I can give it here. At the very least it enlivens and humanizes factual and statistical history, while at its best it offers evidence which the conventional historian can then use to evaluate and interpret documents. Verbal evidence is the material not only of history, but of reality.

Charyk does not interpret. Instead, he gathers his material and focusses it on a number of issues: first days, the names of towns and school districts, school buildings and equipment, heating, toilet arrangements, water supply, weather disasters, duties of a teacher, discipline, special days and, finally, examinations. Though at first glance the issues may appear obvious and even simple, they are very important in terms of the history of educational development and practice in Canada.

One of the most moving stories is

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Hilda Watts' account of a blizzard in 1917 in the Congress School-District near Admiral, Saskatchewan. During a raging blizzard seven children and their teacher joined hands and ventured out to the privy. The force of the wind separated them, and the teacher and one of the students wandered out onto the prairie until, half-frozen, they came to a homesteader's shack. Two of the girls found their way to the barn near the school, and four others aged between nine and thirteen, froze to death. Watts ends her story interpretatively with the comment that the death of the four children strengthened the demand for fences and telephones in every school. This, and the stories about contaminated wells, privies whose accessibility depended on the vagaries of weather and the consistently inadequate

financing for school buildings, give the lie to the stereotyped anecdotes about the one-room school where both pupils and teachers are made the butt of tasteless jokes.

It is good to see Charyk taking seriously the physical conditions of learning and teaching. He devotes a lot of attention to the fact that schools had no water or electricity. Children had to carry their own water to school or someone had to be hired to bring in a daily supply. Even then the children all drank from a common cup. Mice, gophers, and dead vegetation often floated in what wells there were, and teachers aged 18 or 19, just out of normal school, were given the responsibility of teaching several grades and managing children who often did not understand or speak English. It must have taken courage and resource-

fulness to teach under such conditions, and many of the recorded interviews bear this out.

Courage was not the only quality to emerge in teachers. Sometimes the primitive conditions brought out the worst in a teacher. Strapping was universally accepted and was administered for '... fighting, refusing to work, playing hooky, forging report cards, throwing snowballs, doing damage to school property ... swearing ... stealing, unchaste actions, cheating, tardiness ... smoking, lying, bullying, and so on.' In short, everything. Bruce Lamb, who went to school in Smeaton, Saskatchewan, ends his story about a punishing teacher thus: 'How we learned anything with the horror of the strap constantly on our minds, I'll never know ... those were the years I was learning spelling, and I have never been good at it since.'

There are many more first-hand accounts of punishments, lack of lunch-time supervision and thoughtless teachers. But there are also happier accounts of what Charyk calls 'special days'. Pupils exhibited everything from poultry to pies at the school fair and winter brought Christmas concerts and valentine parties.

The most rewarding chapter in the book is the one about place names. The names of the towns are exotic enough — Czar, Endiang, Aneroid — but the names of school districts are even more colourful and enigmatic. Charyk explains the origin of Tangleflags, Uneeda, Good Cheer, Rustle and Cepeear, and in so doing, he records local history. He is also recording local history, but unconsciously, when he tells of the emphasis on religion and patriotism. Daily prayers and raising the flag represented the values of the majority and were mandatory in the one-room school. From a compilation such as we have in *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, it is difficult to know what happened to the values of the minority. Perhaps for that we should turn to the fictions *Who Has Seen the Wind* and *As for Me and My House*. Both novels depict the suffering of those whose differences the community could neither accept nor tolerate.

Charyk's text is greatly enhanced by the 80 or so photographs that he collected from private individuals, local and provincial archives, and museums. Although Charyk's text is marred and fragmented by too many headings in bold type, he has succeeded in recreating the details of life in and around the one-room school. We can say of him what the historian Jules Michelet said of himself: '... great historians have been brilliant, judicious and profound; as for me, I have loved more.'

Miriam Waddington, recently retired professor of English at York University, was born and grew up in Winnipeg. Her poetry and short stories often reflect her early years on the prairies.

THE VOYAGE OF THE SCHOONER POLAR BEAR

Whaling and Trading in the North
Pacific and Arctic, 1913-1914

By Bernhard Kilian, Chief Engineer, with an Appendix by Dunbar Lockwood. Edited, and with an Introduction, by John Bockstoce. Published at the New Bedford Whaling Museum by the Old Dartmouth Historical Society and the Alaska Historical Commission, 1983. 106 pp., illus. \$25.00 (U.S. funds).

Reviewed by Ernest S. Burch, Jr

In 1910 the bottom had long since dropped out of the world market for whale oil, the market for baleen was dying fast, and the price of white fox pelts was just beginning to rise from almost nothing. It was an economic interlude in the North, a time when it was especially difficult to make a living there. To survive, one had to do a little of this, a little of that, and hope that, when the results were in, there would be black ink on the bottom line. Louis Lane was one person who had the flexibility, resilience and background knowledge to at least make a go of it. In 1913 he set out for Siberia and Alaska in his schooner, the *Polar Bear*, on a cruise that managed to include tourism, whaling, sport hunting, fur trading and even ferryboat duties before it was over.

Ben Kilian, at the age of twenty, signed up as the chief engineer of the *Polar Bear* for the cruise of 1913. Kilian was seeking adventure, and he got more than he had bargained for when the ship got caught in the heavy ice of that year and had to spend the winter on the frigid and barren shores of the Beaufort Sea. Fortunately, he took along a camera, a notebook and a sense of humour, and his photographs and diary form the basis of this book. In addition, there is a brief but useful introduction by arctic archaeologist and historian John Bockstoce, and an interesting journal of a side expedition by Dunbar Lockwood.

Kilian's account will make a pleasant hour's reading for almost anybody. He was intelligent, and a refreshingly curious and open-minded young man seeking travel and adventure in a strange part of the world. He saw quite a bit of it, too, since the *Polar Bear* travelled up the west coast to Alaska, crossed to Siberia, went up and down the Chukotka coast a couple of times, crossed back to Alaskan shores, rounded Point Barrow to northeastern Alaska — which is where they got stuck for the winter — and eventually sailed into the eastern Beaufort Sea. During the winter, Kilian made a sled trip to Herschel Island, and spent a week living with an Inuit family on another occasion. These travels and adventures are reported in a lean, straightforward style, and in a comprehensive series of photographs.

While the book has definite entertainment value, it has rather little else to recommend it. Readers already knowledgeable about this part of the world will find in it little that they did not already know. However, tidbits scattered here and there in both the text and the photos do add an occasional detail to the previously available supply of information on whaling, North Alaskan Inuit, and the Canadian Arctic Expedition. Unfortunately, most of these nuances will be lost on the uninitiated, since the editor did not employ his considerable knowledge of the region to annotate the text.

Kilian's cryptic reporting also deprives us of any of the human

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drama that inevitably develops during expeditions of this kind. For example, the frustration and fear, or, alternatively, the thrill that the men must have felt when they found themselves trapped for the winter in a forbidding land go unnoticed. The cabin fever that evidently infected one or two members of the crew also is barely alluded to, although the expedition seems to have been well organized to minimize that sometimes dreadful problem.

Most arctic buffs will enjoy this book, at least as much for its photographs as for its text. In addition, its general format, glossy paper and generally handsome appearance make it a candidate for the coffee-table book status. Scholars, however, except for those pursuing extremely specialized subjects, can probably pass the book by.

Ernest S. Burch, Jr is a research associate with the department of anthropology of the Smithsonian Institution; he has 25 years of experience in arctic research. Formerly he was associate professor of anthropology, University of Winnipeg.

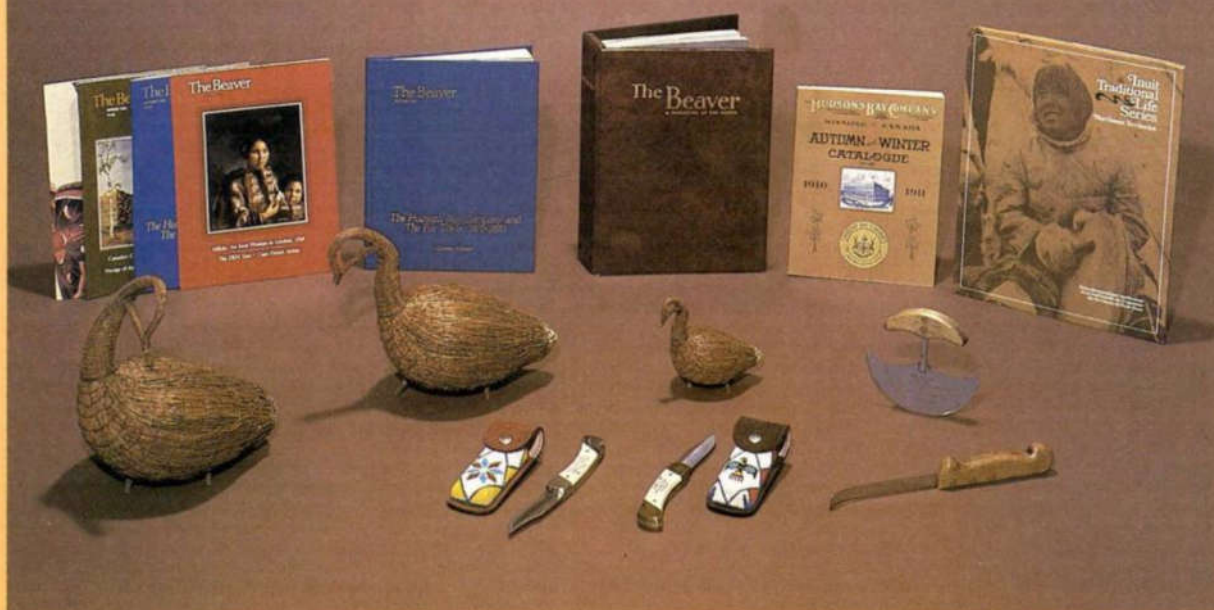
Errata, Autumn 1984

Page 38, first sentence in column 2 should read 'a disc bearing the official registered number.'

Page 42, caption should read 'where he and others of his camp awaited the arrival of the "Rupertsland".'

Page 61, the biographical note on Jennifer Brown should read 'professor of history at the University of Winnipeg'.

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